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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MIDDLETOWN, VERMONT,  
IN  
THREE DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
CITIZENS OF THAT TOWN,

FEBRUARY 7 AND 21, AND MARCH 30, 1867,

BY THE  
Hon. BARNES FRISBIE,

POULTNEY, VT.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF MIDDLETOWN.

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RUTLAND, VT.  
TUTTLE & COMPANY, PRINTERS.  
1867.



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## HISTORY OF MIDDLETOWN.

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FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:—You have assembled this evening to hear from me the history of Middletown. I should rejoice if I could assure you that I had a full and complete history; but I cannot so assure you. I have recently written it out, although I have for twelve years or more intended to do so, and in the meantime have been collecting the materials, as I had opportunity. I now present it to you, not as a full and complete history, but as the best production I am able to give you.

Much of the early history of the town is in oblivion. Fifty years ago, when many of those pioneer fathers and mothers were living, the most of it might have been gathered up and saved; but such as I have been able to collect in my time is hereby most respectfully and affectionately dedicated to and for the use of my native town.

I wish here to say, that for the literary merits of my production I claim nothing. My desire, and, I may say, only purposes have been to collect all the material facts I possibly could which go to make up your history, and to express them intelligibly and truthfully, conscious that if those facts can be preserved, they may be put in better form by some one more capable than myself, who shall come after me.

In regard to the history of this town, however, I do claim, that with the labor and attention I have given the matter during the last twelve years, that I have collected a good deal more of it than is now in the possession of any other person; hence the importance of my writing it. I fear that unless I should write it,

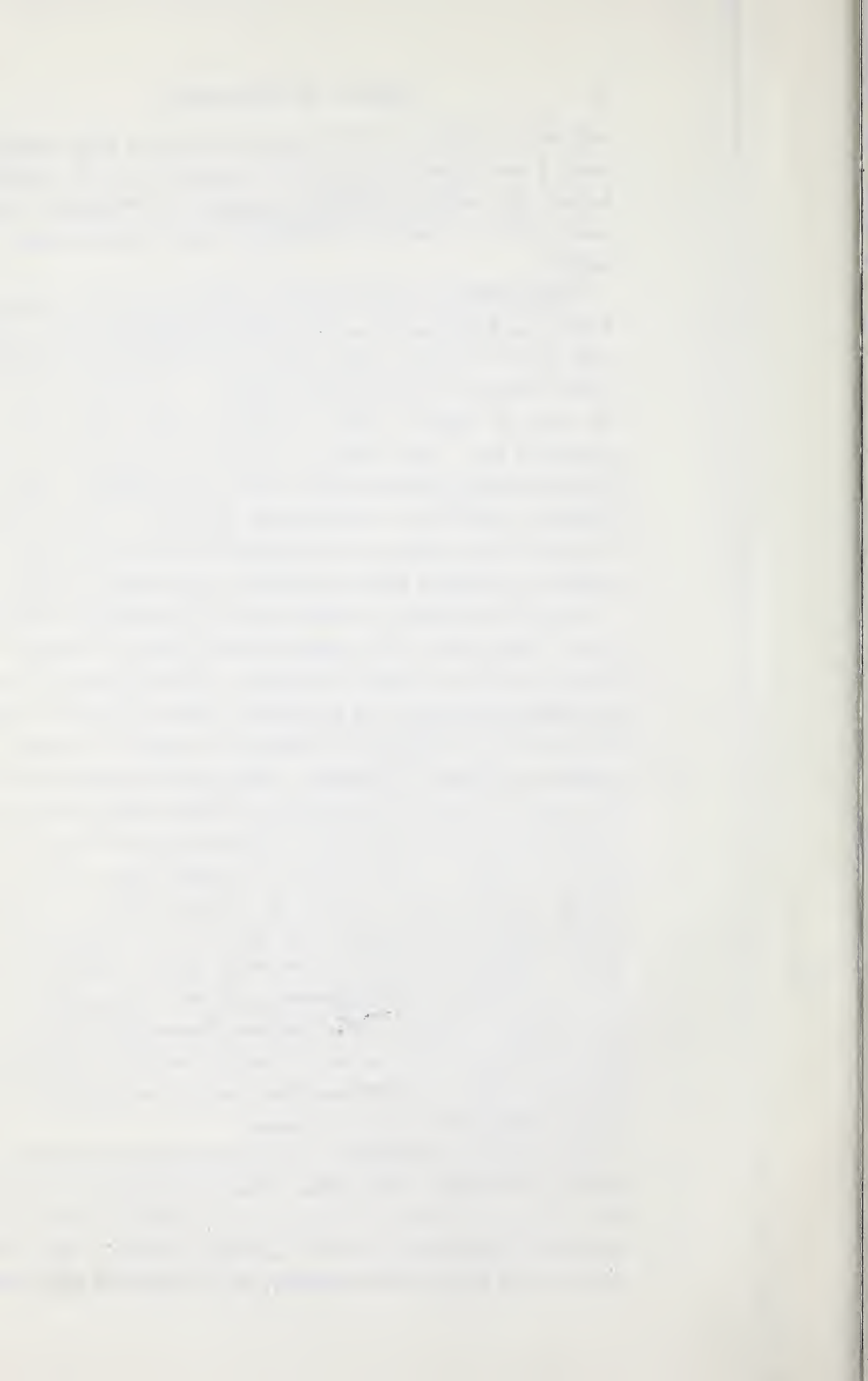


and leave it where it will be preserved, that a large portion of what I now have, incomplete and imperfect as it is, would be beyond the reach of mortals at my decease. With this view I have written it, and am now happy to meet this full house and read it.

MIDDLETOWN is situated in the south-western part of Rutland County, and is bounded on the north by Poultney and Ira, on the east by Ira and Tinmouth, on the south by Tinmouth and Wells, and on the west by Wells and Poultney. As will be seen from the map, its shape or form is peculiar, which will be hereafter accounted for. The territory of which it is composed was taken from the towns of Poultney, Ira, Tinmouth and Wells. Poultney, Tinmouth and Wells received their charters as early as 1761. The date of the charter of Ira is believed to have been about the same time, though I have been unable to obtain the exact date.

About three-fourths of a mile north of the village of Middletown, a little east of the present dwelling house of Harvey Lef-fingwell, and in a pasture belonging to Royal Coleman, Esq., is the locality where was the north-east corner of Wells, the south-east corner of Poultney, the south-west corner of Ira, and the north-west corner of Tinmouth. The line from thence, between the towns of Wells and Tinmouth, run south, passing in its course through the eastern part of the village between the school house and the stream, a little west of the school house; also, in its course further south, it makes the west line of the "old Zenas Frisbie farm," so called, the east line of the "Thomas Morgan farm," and passes very near the west line of the "Burnam farm," now owned by S. W. Southworth, and the "Perry farm," now owned by Mr. Atwater. The line from thence (the corners above named), between the towns of Poultney and Ira, ran directly north from those corners, and lines running east and west from thence divided the towns above named.

The township of Middletown was created by an act of the Legislature of October 28th, 1784. Prior to that time the town, or the territory of which it is composed, was included in the above named four towns, with the lines as above indicated. The settlement of the town, or the territory, was commenced some years



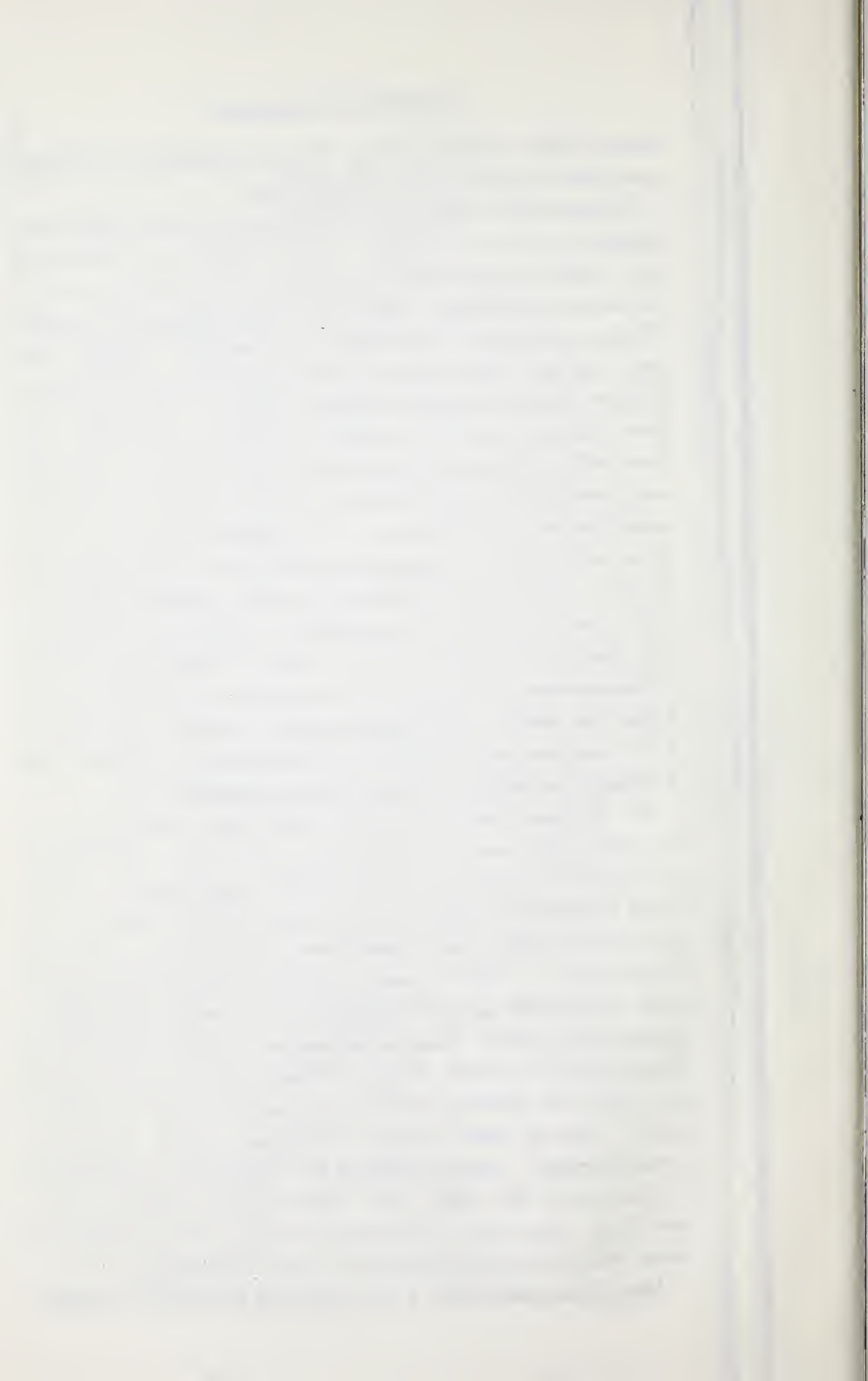


before 1784; and in speaking of this settlement, we shall, for convenience, speak of it as in Middletown.

The exact date when the first settlers of the town came here, perhaps cannot now be given. It was before the revolutionary war. Mr. Thompson in his history says, that "the settlement was commenced a short time before the revolutionary war by Thomas Morgan and others," "and mills were erected." Thomas Morgan came here before the war, and so did Richard and Benjamin Haskins, Phineas Clough and Luther Filmore. Mr. Morgan, who lived until 1841, said to me before his death, that when he came here he found his way by marked trees, and that when he arrived not a tree had been cut, but throughout the entire town it was one unbroken forest. He also said to me, that he came about three years before the war commenced, and that when that commenced he left. But he probably treated the stirring events of 1777 in this region, in which we may include the evacuation of Ticonderoga, Burgoyne's invasion, and the battle of Bennington, as the commencement of the war, for he was here until a short time before the battle of Bennington, which occurred August 16th, 1777, over two years after the war had commenced. So that the probability is that the settlement was commenced in 1774.

Mr. Morgan, after he came, like all the early settlers, put up a log house, and commenced clearing up the forest. Mr. Morgan purchased a hundred acres of land about three-fourths of a mile south of where the village now is, and put up his log house a few feet north of where the framed house now stands on the "old Morgan farm." By the summer of 1777, I should judge, he had made considerable progress in clearing up his land, as he had that summer four acres of wheat, some sixty or seventy rods from his house, opposite of where Truman Kibburn now lives, and on the east side and adjoining what is now known as the "Coy Hill road." He was called away to Bennington, and his wheat was never harvested. Richard Haskins had commenced a settlement a little east of the village, near where Lucius Copeland, Esq., now lives. He, too, in the summer of 1777, had two acres of wheat which he never harvested, but went to Bennington.

Benj. Haskins had built a log house and commenced a settle-





ment near where Dea. A. Haynes now lives. Luther Filmore had put up a log house on the south-west corner of what is now known as "the green," in the village. Where Phineas Clough first located himself is not now positively known; but he very early settled on what has since been known as the "Orcutt farm," now occupied by Mr. Lobdill. Those five men are all who are now known to have been here before the Revolutionary war. They all left in the summer of 1777, joined the militia at Manchester, and were all in Bennington battle.

But were "mills erected" before the war? The mills known as "Miner's mills," in an early day, were built by Gideon Miner in 1782. They were located about a mile and a half east of where the village now is. Mr. Morgan then assisted Mr. Miner, as a workman, in building the mills. Morgan brought the mill irons from Bennington on a horse. Some of the Miner family have informed us that there was "some sort of a mill there" when Mr. Miner came; but Mr. Morgan's descendants are confident that he had nothing to do with mills in Middletown until he worked for Miner in 1782. So that we cannot reliably state by whom this some sort of a mill was built. The opinion of the old people seems to have been that it was the work of Mr. Morgan. It might have been; but whosoever it was, the mill never went into operation, and Mr. Miner had to build anew in 1782.

Mr. Thompson says, that the settlers "returned after the war." It is true there was not much done by way of settlement for some three or four years subsequent to the summer of 1777, when the settlers left to meet the invaders at Bennington. But we find Benj. Haskins and Phineas Clough back here in 1778, and Morgan and Filmore were back soon after; and a good many others were here before the close of the war. Azor Perry came as early as 1778. James and Thomas McClure, it is supposed, came in 1779. William and Jonathan Frisbie came in 1781; and Gideon Miner, Nathaniel Wood and his sons, Jacob and Ephraim, Caleb Smith, Jonathan Brewster, Gamaliel Waldo, Nathan Walton, and some others were here as early as 1782. And Joseph Spaulding and some others, it is supposed, came the same year, but we cannot be positive. We find that a Congregational Church was organ-



ized as early as the spring of 1782, and Mr. Spaulding was made the clerk of the church.

We shall now omit further mention of the first settlers, and the incidents, trials and hardships attending the settlement, until after we give an account of the organization of the town.

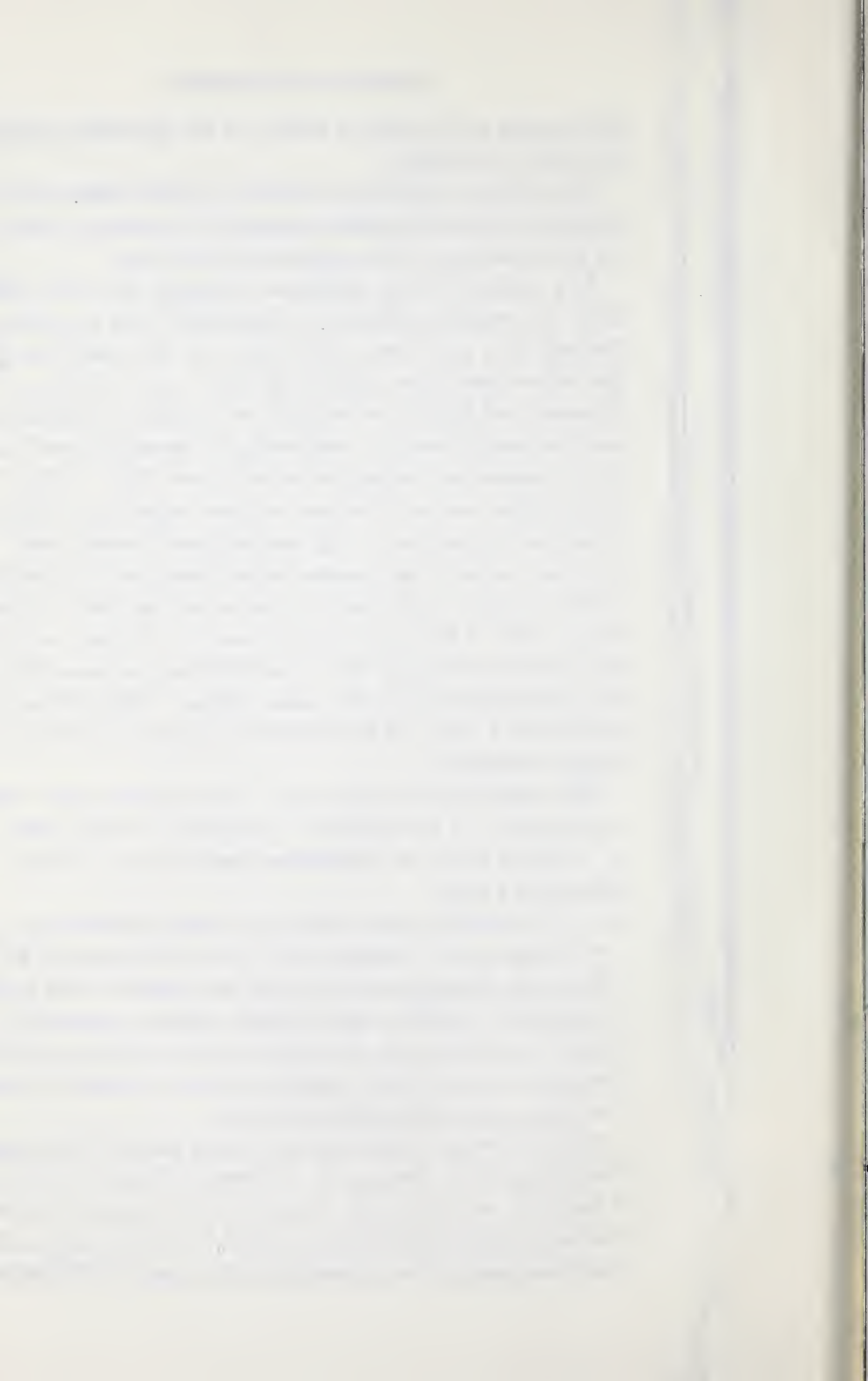
It is evident that the settlement was rapid, for in the fall of 1784, the people petitioned the Legislature, then in session at Rutland, for a new town—and we can now very readily see that the settlers upon those parts of the then towns of Poultney, Ira, Tinmouth and Wells, now included in the limits of Middletown, would naturally become a community by themselves, and unite their interests and feelings in spite of town lines. They had already done so—two churches had been organized—Congregational and Baptist, and a log meeting house erected near the south-east corner of the present burial ground, and the members of the churches were from the four towns, but had a common center, where it has been since, and now is. If those town lines had never been changed, there must have been the same churches here, the same business—the same village. Nature formed the territory for a town, and as the settlers increased in numbers, they became aware of it.

The original petition for a town, I have not been able to find, but the prayer of the petitioners was granted. On the 28th day of October, 1784, the Legislature passed an act of which the following is a copy :

*An Act constituting a new Town by the name of Middletown.*

“WHEREAS, the inhabitants of a part of the towns of Wells, Tinmouth, Poultney and Ira, which are included in the bounds hereinafter described, have, by their petition represented, that they labor under great inconveniences with meeting with their several towns for public worship and town business, by reason of being surrounded by high mountains,

“Be it therefore enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the representatives of the freemen of the State of Vermont in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, that the tract of land or district hereinafter described, be and is hereby created and incorporated into a township, by the name of Middletown,





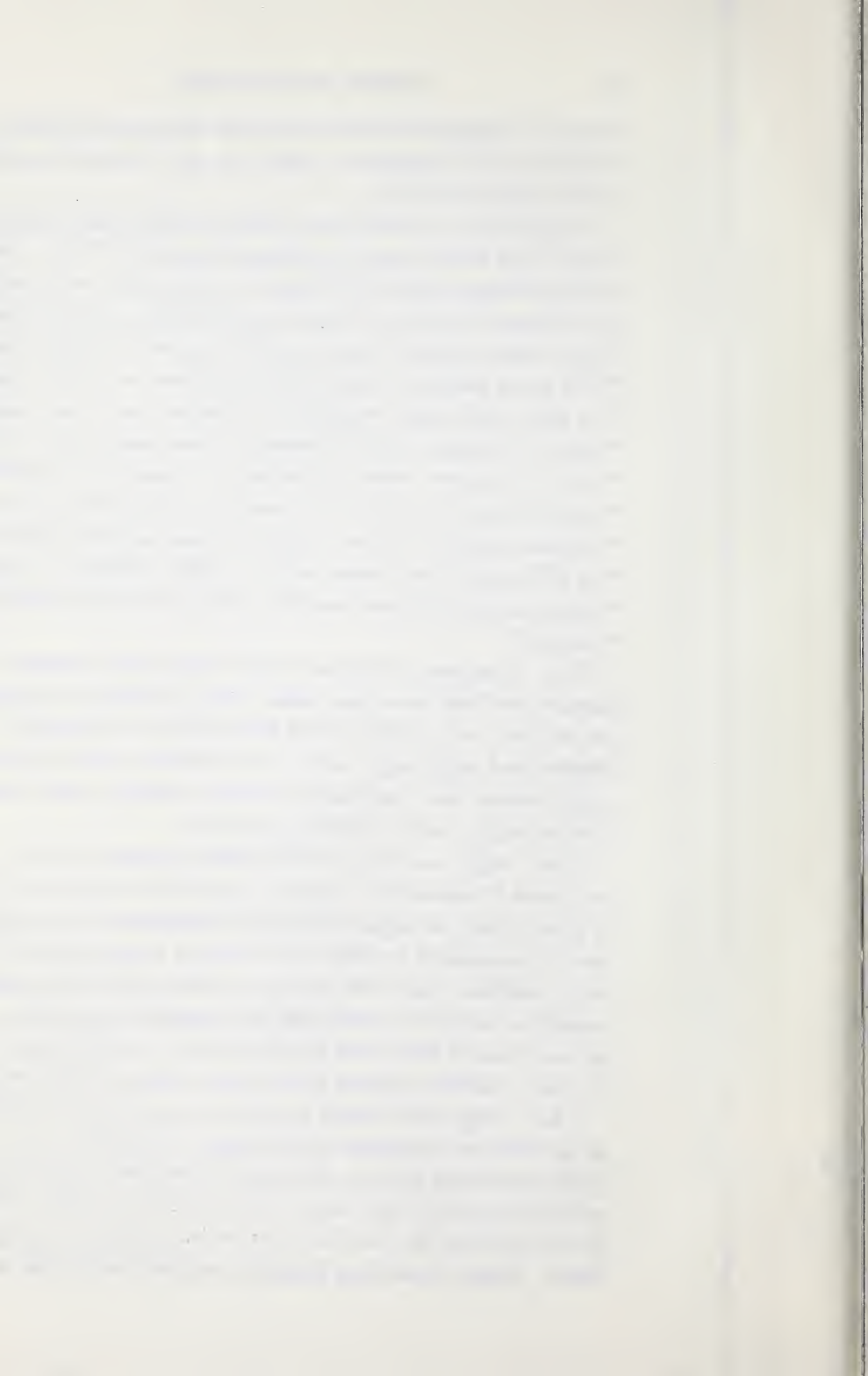
“and the inhabitants thereof and their successors with the like  
“privileges and prerogatives, which the other towns in the state  
“are invested with, viz :

“Beginning at a beech tree marked, standing west 26 degrees  
“south 310 chains from the north-east corner of Wells; thence  
“east 40 degrees south 290 chains, to a white ash tree standing  
“in Timmouh west line; thence east 10 degrees south 45 chains,  
“to a beech marked; thence north 33 degrees east 264 chains,  
“to a beech marked; thence north 10 degrees west 333 chains,  
“to stake and stones standing in Poultney east line; thence  
“south 10 degrees west 28 chains, to stake and stones; thence  
“west 11 degrees north 60 chains, to a small beech marked;  
“thence south 45 chains, to a hard beech tree; thence west 40  
“degrees south 207 chains 5 links, to a stake and stones standing  
“in Wells north line; thence west — south 4 chains, to a stake;  
“thence south 10 degrees west 185 chains, to the first mentioned  
“bounds.”

From Thompson's Vermont we find that three thousand five hundred and ten acres were taken from Timmouth, six thousand one hundred and eighteen acres from Wells, two thousand three hundred and eighty-eight acres from Poultney, and one thousand eight hundred and twenty-acres from Ira; making in all fourteen thousand eight hundred and forty-one acres.

Those “high mountains,” with which the petitioners for a new town were “surrounded,” seem to have directed the survey; as, in point of fact, all acquainted with the locality well know that the town is surrounded by hills and mountains running around it in such directions, that the survey, as above given, in running around on the tops of those hills and mountains, gives the peculiar and unusual form which Middletown has, as will be seen from the map; and this accounts for the form or shape of the town.

I have very much desired to give you more than I am able to of the action of the people in procuring their charter; or, more properly speaking perhaps, their act of incorporation, and for that purpose have sent to the office of the Secretary of State for the original petition, but the Secretary writes me that it cannot be found. Joseph Spaulding, doubtless, took the lead in that move-



ment. He was a practical surveyor, and made the survey which appears in the act; and in this survey he was governed by his own judgment, that is, the people submitted that matter to him, and he, in fact, located the bounds of the town. He ran his lines where he thought it best for all concerned, and no one, either in Middletown or the towns from which it was taken, to our knowledge, was ever dissatisfied; and, indeed we do not see how any one could be. After Mr. Spaulding had made his survey, and completed his arrangements for bringing the matter before the Legislature, the people conceded to him the honor of giving the name to the town, which he did. Mr. Spaulding had removed here from Middletown, Conn., and that name he said was thereby suggested to him, and he thought it very appropriate from the fact that the new town which they had in contemplation, and which if created, would be located in the middle of four towns. In the fall of 1784, the Legislature of Vermont sat at Rutland. Mr. Spaulding, with the petition in his pocket—the necessary arrangements having been completed—went to Rutland while the Legislature was in session, and as we say in modern times “engineered it through;” the act was passed.

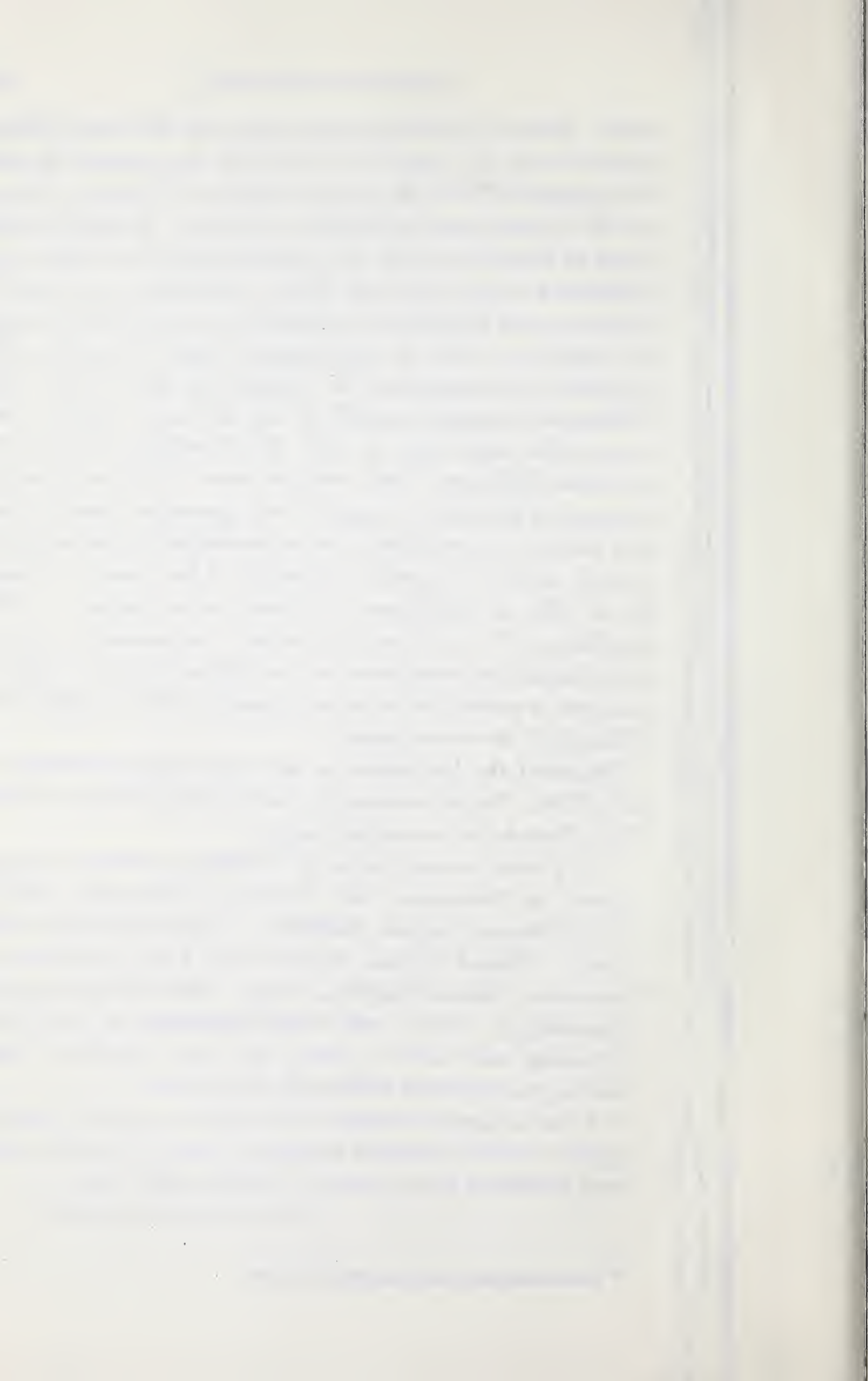
This act of the Legislature we have seen was passed October 28th, 1784. We find a record of a town meeting November 17th, 1784, of which the following is a copy:

“At a town meeting holden at Middletown, at the \*meeting house, on Wednesday, the 17th day of November, 1784, *Voted*, Edmund Bigelow, Moderator; Joseph Rockwell, Town Clerk; Edmund Bigelow, Justice of the Peace; elected as a committee, Edmund Bigelow, Joseph Rockwell and Joseph Spaulding, to reckon with several inhabitants of the town respecting costs made in getting the town established. The meeting was adjourned to Thursday the 22d inst.”

“At the adjourned meeting—*Voted*, That the amount allowed by the committee chosen for examining accounts for getting the town established be two pounds, 12 shillings and 7 pence.

JOSEPH ROCKWELL, Register.”

\* The meeting house mentioned was the log one.





The record of which the foregoing is a copy, must be regarded as the record of the organization of the town. There is no record of any notice of the meeting, (if there was one it was not recorded,) but the record leaves no doubt of the date of the organization, to wit: November 17th, 1784. From this record we learn that Edmund Bigelow was the first moderator of the town, and the first Justice of the Peace—the latter office he held for many years afterwards, and that Joseph Rockwell was the first Town Clerk. We also learn the expenses of “getting the town established,” from which we may conclude that it was not very expensive, at least to the town.

The first annual town meeting was holden March 7th, 1785, at which meeting they elected the following town officers: Hon. Thomas Porter of Tinmouth, being present, was chosen moderator, Joseph Rockwell, town clerk; Jonathan Brewster, Jacob Wood and Edmund Bigelow, selectmen; Caleb Smith, town treasurer; Ephraim Wood, constable; Ashur Blunt, Jona. Griswold, Reuben Searl, listers; Silas Mallary, collector; Jona. Frisbie, leather sealer; Samuel Sunderlin, Reuben Searl, grand jurymen; Nathan Record, tithingman; Elisha Gilbert, hayward; Caleb Smith, brauder of horses; Increase Rudd, sealer of measures; Edmund Bigelow, sealer of weights; Abraham White, Solomon Hill, John Sunderlin, Benjamin Haskins, Benjamin Coy, Phineas Clough and James McClure, highway surveyors; Luther Filmore, pound keeper, Thomas Morgan, William Frisbie and Increase Rudd, fence viewers.

At the same meeting Ephraim Wood, Gamaliel Waldo, Reuben Searl, Bethel Hurd Benj. Coy, James McClure and Edmund Bigelow, were appointed a committee to divide the town into school districts. That committee afterwards performed that duty, and the school districts, with a very little alteration, remain to this day as recommended by that committee.

At the same meeting the town

“Voted, to work two days on highways.”

“Voted, that swine should not run at large.”

“Voted, that warnings be put up on the meeting house until a sign post be erected.”



Immediately following the record of this the first annual town meeting, is a record of what is called "A Roll of the freemen of Middletown." There is no date given to it, and my first impression was, that it was a list of those who voted at a freeman's meeting in the fall of 1785, but on examination of it, and other records and facts that have come to my knowledge, I was well satisfied that it was made in the spring of 1785. It may be a list of those who voted at the town meeting March 7th, 1785, but that it was made early in the spring of that year, I think is quite certain. This "Roll" I have copied. The following are the names:

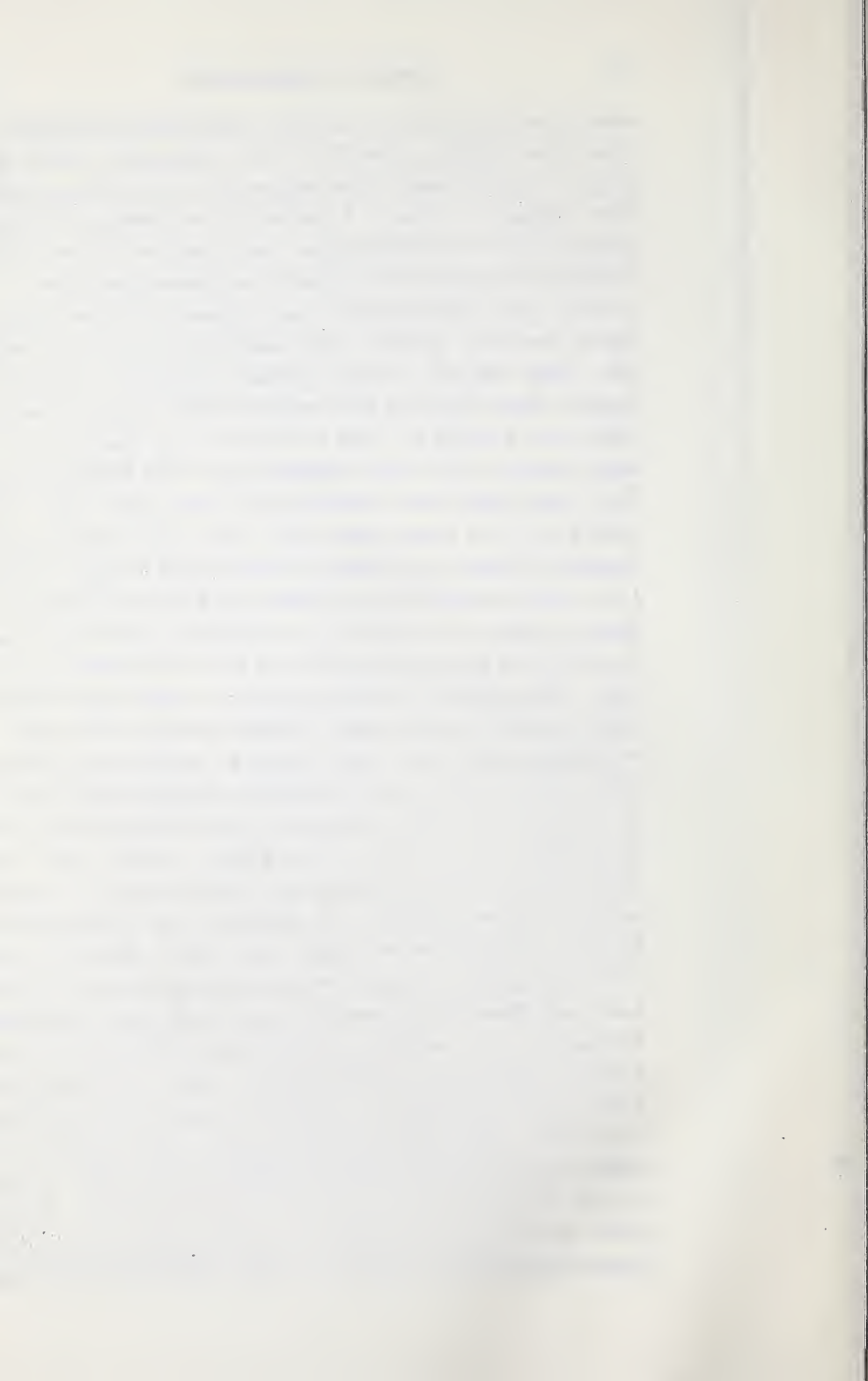
Ephraim Wood,	Isaiah Johnson,	William Frisbie,
John Sunderlin,	Abel White,	Anson Perry,
Dan'l Haskins,	Benj. Coy,	Sylvanus Stone,
Samuel Sunderlin,	Timothy Smith,	Thomas French,
Jacob Wood,	Francis Perkins,	Gideon Buel,
Reuben Searle,	Samuel Stoddard,	Caleb Smith,
Joseph Spaulding,	Benj. Butler,	Jona Griswold,
Jona. Brewster,	Nathan Record,	Gamaliel Waldo,
Benj. Haskins, ✓	Jona. Mehuran,	Joseph Rockwell,
Jona. Haynes,	Elisha Gilbert,	David Griswold,
Increase Rudd,	Richard Haskins,	Edmund Bigelow,
Jesse Hubbard,	Thomas Morgan,	Philemon Wood,
Barzilla Handy,	Chauncy Graves,	Jona. Frisbie,
Gideon Miner,		

It is very fortunate for our purpose that the foregoing roll was made and recorded. By that means we are now able to give all or nearly all the names of the first settlers of the town, or of those who settled here prior to the spring of 1785. We can add to that list the names of Luther Filmore, James and Thomas McClure and Silas Mallary, who are known to have been here prior to the time this roll was made. Fillmore, as we have seen, was here before the revolutionary war, and was elected pound keeper at the first annual meeting; Mallary was elected collector, and James and Thomas McClure are known to have been here about as early as 1779. Were it in my power, I should give a biography of each and every man on the roll, and of the four others last above





named ; but I shall give you all that I have been able to learn of them, after speaking generally of their character, and of the progress they had made in the settlement of the town up to this time, (spring of 1785.) It is due to the memory of those pioneers that we record their good deeds—and this too, we would also do for the benefit of the present and future generations. If we may learn from example, in my opinion, none more worthy can be found than we have in the men whose names are on that roll. They were men of great physical strength and endurance, but that was not all ; they were men of decided energy and mental ability—nor was that all ; they were honest men, unselfish, and a large majority of them were religious men of the Puritan stamp. They were mostly from Connecticut, and came poor, some with nothing but their hands, others with a horse or a yoke of oxen, bringing with them their families and effects upon a wagon or sled. I have often thought that we, at this day, have very inadequate ideas of what is to be done in a new country, especially in one covered with a heavy forest as this was before our ancestors came here. The prairies of the West may be put under improvement, and towns built up with much less labor and time—but when a man makes a pitch in the woods, though he may be young, strong and healthy, the best part of his life for physical labor will be spent by the time his farm is cleared up and under cultivation, and his buildings are erected ; and in addition to this, roads and bridges are to be built ; churches and school houses to be organized, and all the institutions of civilization are to be founded. But those men who first came here were equal to the task ; each selected his place, put up his rude cabin, went into it with his family and effects, and commenced at once in clearing up his land. Interrupted as the settlement was by the revolutionary war, yet we find by the first grand list which was taken in the spring of 1785, that five hundred and seventy-four acres of land had then been cleared. The personal property put into that grand list was eighty-one cows, forty-seven horses, thirty-six oxen, eighty steers, seventy-three head of other cattle, and twenty-two swine. It is a small grand list when compared with that of the town at the present time, but the wonder is how they could have cleared up



that amount of land and acquired that amount of stock in so short a time. A large portion of this work had been accomplished in the years of 1782-3 and 1784. My father who was a son of William Frisbie, told me before he died, that when his father's family came here, which we have seen was in 1781, that he could distinctly recollect what had then been done by way of settlement. He was then six years old. He said that Filmore had cleared up three or four acres where the village now is. Morgan had a little more than that cleared, and the two Haskins and Azor Perry had made some progress in their clearing. He told me that according to his recollection, six log houses had been put up within the present limits of the town, when he came here. Those he gave me as Mr. Morgan's, Filmore's, the two Haskins', Clough's and Azor Perry's. Those were undoubtedly all there were in the town, or within what is now the town in the spring of 1781, except what had been put up on the "McClure road," as it has been called—for it is well known that Isaac Clark (old Rifle) settled there as early as 1779, and that year he was made town clerk of Ira, and James and Thomas McClure settled there, it is believed, the same year. My father did not know of this, or it had escaped his recollection.

Those facts are now referred to, to show the rapidity of the settlement, and it may be added that but few came in 1781, so that by far the greater portion of what was done prior to the spring of 1785 was performed during the years of 1782, '83 and '84. At this time, (1785) we find at least forty-four freemen in the town—the number of inhabitants might have been three or four hundred, as most of the early settlers had large families. We find they had cleared up five hundred and seventy-four acres of land, and this was in small patches from one to thirty acres in different parts of the town; they had procured a charter or act of incorporation, and had organized the town. Two churches had been organized, Congregationalist and Baptist, a meeting house had been built, and initiatory steps had been taken to divide the town into school and highway districts. A grist and saw mill had been erected, and were in active operation, grinding the grain of the settlers, and sawing their lumber. Three framed houses had





been built in the town, and preparations were being made for building more. Thus we have before us what this band of men with strong hands and resolute hearts accomplished in this short space of time.

But we are to speak of those men individually, and in doing this we shall also in the same connection, speak of their descendants. This may not be in proper order, but with my want of ability and experience as a writer, I do not propose to be responsible for any want of order or method in my history, but expect to be responsible for the statement of facts I give.

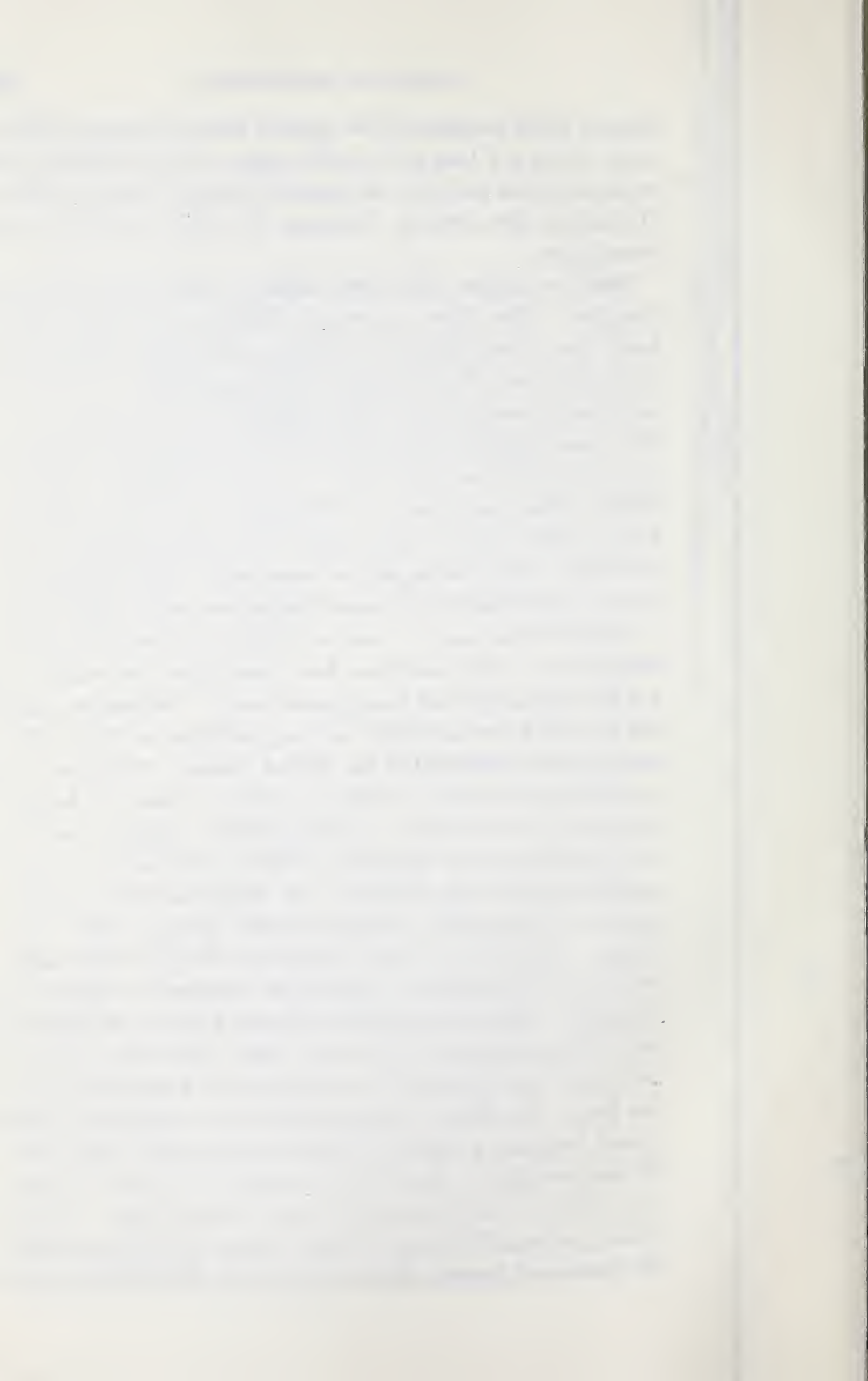
Thomas Morgan "made the first clearing," as he once said to me, and of which there can be no doubt; and as before mentioned, it was about three-fourths of a mile south of where the village now is. Mr. Morgan claimed to have built the first framed house in town, though he said Filmore and Richard Haskins each commenced building the same season, but that his house was first completed. The house is now standing and owned by his grandson, Daniel Morgan, and of late years has been occupied by tenants. Mr. Morgan was from the town of Kent, in Connecticut. He was three times married, but had one child only, the late Jonathan Morgan. Thomas Morgan lived where he first settled up to about the time of his death which occurred December 20th, 1841, at the age of ninety-four years. Jonathan Morgan was born in 1782, and was the first child born in Middletown, (that is in what became Middletown in 1784.) Mr. Morgan was regarded by many as being over tenacious of his rights, and has often been accused of being needlessly violent in asserting his rights;—but he was a man of good judgment, well informed, and always kept himself familiar with all the affairs of the town. He was for many years a justice of the peace; represented the town in 1838, and very often held the office of selectman, and other offices, the duties of which he was never known to neglect, but discharged them understandingly, and with an honest purpose. In the latter part of November, 1857, Mr. Morgan then quite feeble, drove his horse and carriage from his house to the village upon some errand, and on his return, his horse took fright soon after crossing the bridge in the south part of the village, threw



him out of his carriage, and so injured him that he never recovered. If he had been well the fall might not have injured him much, but feeble as he was, he survived the shock but a few days. He died at Mrs. Green's, December 3d, 1847, at the age of seventy-five.

Jonathan Morgan left seven children; three sons and four daughters. The oldest son was in California when last heard from; the second, Daniel, now occupies and owns the homestead of his father, also the homestead of his grandfather. The third son, Merritt, recently moved from Middletown to Cambridge, Vt. The oldest daughter, Huldah, married Daniel Cushman, of Pawlet, and now resides in that town; the second daughter married Nathan Winn, and lives in Wallingford; the third daughter, Lorensy, died about two years ago; the youngest daughter lives in Lowell, Massachusetts, and is unmarried. Daniel Morgan is the only representative of Thomas Morgan now left in Middletown.

Luther Filmore was the man who felled the forest where the village now is. He came here from Bennington, but where he was from originally is not in my power to say. His grandson once told me that he was a brother of the grandfather of Millard Filmore, the late President of the United States. If that was so, we shall not claim that he was any better or worse for being a brother of a man who had so distinguished a grandson; but the old folks all agree in giving Mr. Filmore the credit of being a sensible man, and a good citizen. He seemed to have the public interest at heart, and did much towards giving a start to the village. He had put up his temporary cabin, (as before mentioned,) on the south-west corner of the common or "green," as it is called. He afterwards built a framed house on the opposite side of the road, and in what is now Mrs. Gray's door yard, or that part of it situated on the west side of the house in which she now lives. Mr. Filmore owned the land now occupied as a burial ground, and gave a deed of it to the town September 30th, 1787. He also owned the "green;" also owned one hundred and fifty acres which included the present limits of the village. To Mr. Filmore belongs the honor of being the first Inn keeper in town. He commenced keeping tavern soon after he built his house, and

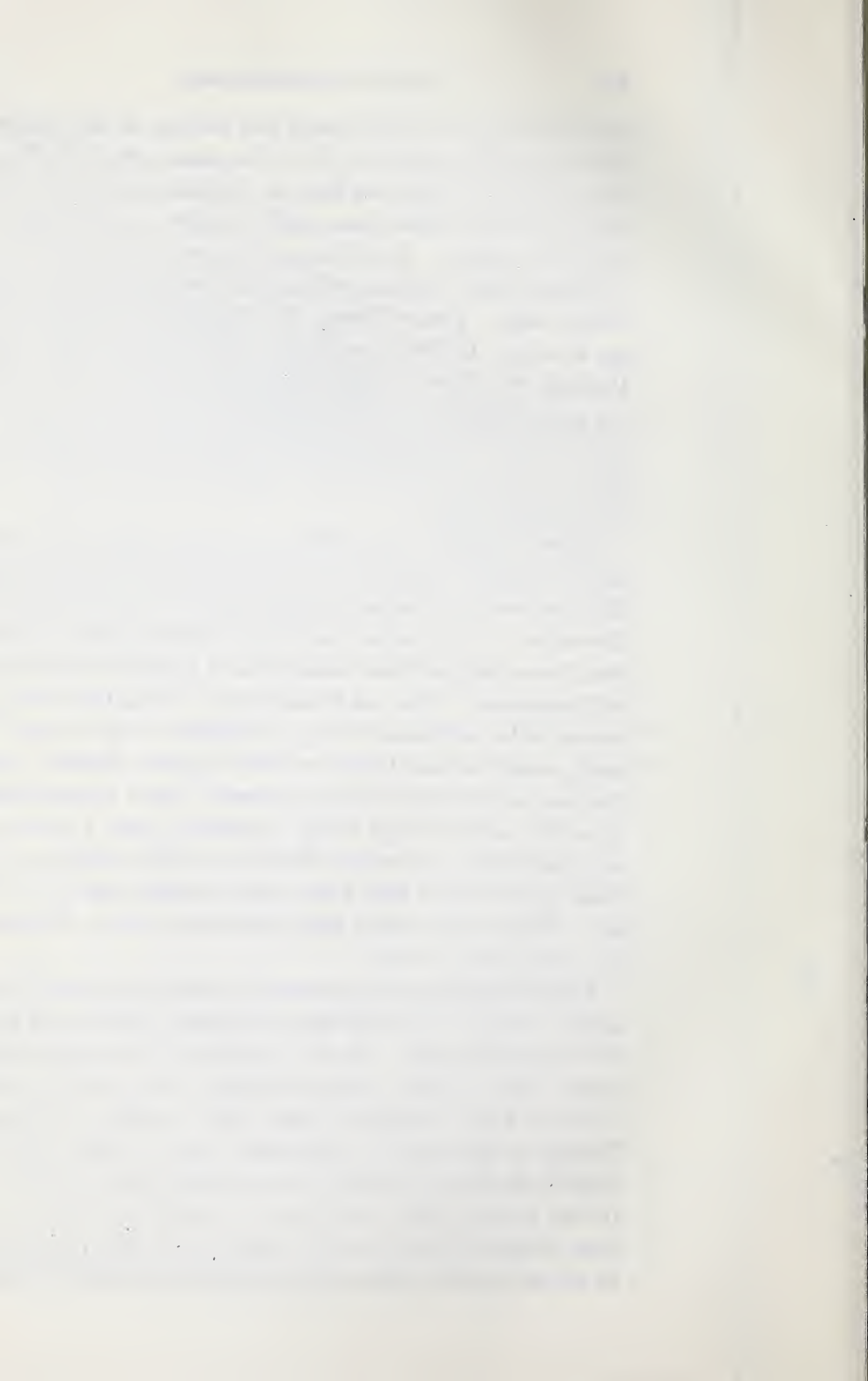




a tavern was kept in the house by him and one of the Brewster family until some years after 1800. Sometime after 1811, Henry Gray bought the place, and lived in the house until about 1835, when he built the brick house, which has since been occupied by him and his family. The old tavern house was moved down below "cider mill hill," repaired, and has since been occupied by tenants of Mr. Gray. Luther Filmore died February 9th, 1809, at the age of sixty. He left several sons, none are now living. Mrs. Hutchins, the widow of Elisha Hutchins, now living in this town, is a grand daughter of Luther Filmore, and is the only descendant in town left. Mrs. Hutchins has two brothers, Luther and Edmund Filmore, who were natives of the town, but are now living in some of the western states.

Richard Haskins, who settled, as before stated, near where Lucius Copeland, Esq., now lives, did not return after Bennington battle as soon as his brother Benjamin did, but was kept longer in the service. Mr. Haskins was from Norwich, Conn., the same town from which the Wood families came; he had lived with them in Connecticut. When the Woods came in 1782, they took possession of his settlement there, and Haskins took the next lot north, which is now known as Mr. Copeland Haskins' farm. Haskins put that farm under improvement, lived a long and industrious life, raised a large family of children, drew a pension of ninety-six dollars a year, and died about 1845 in Highgate, Vt., where he had a short time before gone to reside with one of his sons. He was over eighty years old when he died. He has no descendants now in town.

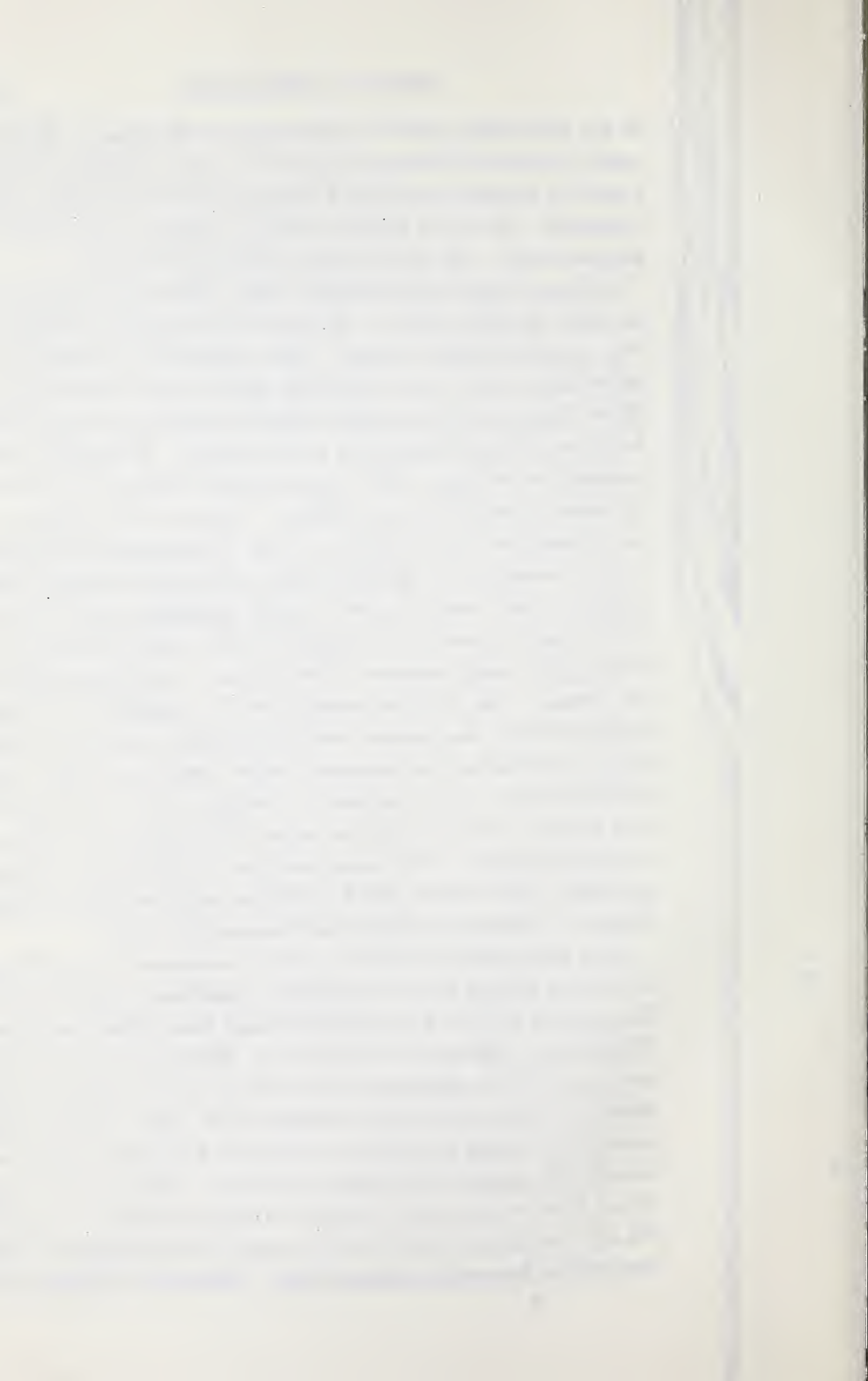
Benjamin Haskins, though somewhat erratic, was a more useful man to society in his time, than his brother Richard, and had a more reputable family. He was a member of the congregational church, and a sober, sedate, eccentric man, and was called "Deacon Ben," though he never held the office of Deacon. Though to appearances, a dull, slow man, yet when occasion required, he showed himself to be a resolute, and powerful man. On one occasion while driving some cattle from Pawlet to his home, which we have seen was where Dea. A. Haynes now lives, he was set upon by a pack of fourteen wolves near what is known



as the Wait place, about two miles south of his house. He prepared himself on their approach with a strong cudgel, and succeeded in beating them off, and bringing himself and cattle away unharmed. He was a kind and obliging neighbor, and zealous in all good works. He died in 1824, at the age of seventy.

Phineas Clough died September 24th, 1809 on the same farm on which he early settled. He left but one child, a daughter, who married Erasmus Orcutt. She succeeded to the farm by inheritance, and it has since been known as the Orcutt farm. Major Clough, as he was always called, was also an eccentric man, but a man of good material for a new country. If anything was necessary to be done which required great exertion, he was not the man to avoid the responsibility. He was not a member of any church, but was a member of the Congregational Society. On one occasion, at a meeting of the society, some measure was proposed which would require a large expenditure, and was at first strongly opposed by a majority of the society, including in that majority many members of the church. Mr. Clough came to the rescue. He told the society that he regarded it of vital importance that the measure should be carried; that he was willing to give his farm, if necessary, rather than have it fail; that although he was not a professor of religion, yet he was sensible that property was of no account unless the institutions of religion could be sustained. It is almost needless to add that Mr. Clough prevailed. Mrs. Orcutt had five children, only one is now living, Phineas C. Orcutt, who resides in Western New York.

Azor Perry comes next in the order of settlement. Mr. Perry procured a deed of one of the original proprietors of the town of Tamaouth in 1777, of a large piece of land then in that town, now Middletown. The deed was executed in Bennington, and in the spring of 1778 he shouldered his ax, all he had to bring but the clothes he wore, and took possession of his land. It was the same piece of land long known as the Azor Perry farm, and now owned and occupied by Jonathan Atwater. He put up a log house, between where Mr. Atwater's dwelling house now is and his cider mill, and about where his corn house now stands. He covered his house with poles and bark. He made a bedstead of





poles, and used elm bark as a substitute for cords. He lived alone the first year, and managed to get a cow the first summer, which he wintered on browse; that is, he cut down trees, and the cow eat the tops. He was married at Bennington in 1779. He had managed, in the year before he was married, to save enough to get a calico wedding dress for his wife, and some few indispensable articles of household furniture to commence with. Mr. Perry was a rough, unpolished man, and a man of strong will and undoubted courage. He was from the town of Orange, Conn., but lived a while in Bennington before coming to Middletown. He was in Bennington battle, and in one or two engagements in the first year of the war. A good many good stories were told of his encounters with bears and wolves, during his first years in Middletown. We can make room for but one or two:—On one occasion he was in the woods about a mile from his house, when he saw a young bear, a cub, and having no weapons to kill it, he ran and caught it, when the cub seizing one of his hands in his mouth, biting through his hand, held it fast in its mouth. Perry, in vain tried to extricate his hand from the cub's mouth, and when he saw he could not do it without help, he took the cub, weighing over one hundred pounds, under his arm and carried it to his house, a mile or more, where with assistance he was relieved.

At another time, there was a bear that lived on the hills some where between the Smith Wait and Buxton farms, and had become notorious for killing the sheep, calves and hogs, and destroying the corn in that vicinity. There had been a good deal of effort to kill the bear without success. At length, it was resolved to engage Mr. Perry to dispatch the bear, which he was very ready to undertake. This was in the fall of the year, and it had been ascertained that the old bear visited, during the evenings, a corn field near where the apple orchard now is on the Buxton farm, then owned by William Frisbie. Perry was informed of this and came on a certain evening, agreeable to appointment, and found a score or so of the citizens of the vicinity collected, and ready to render him assistance if he wanted. He told them that he wanted but one of their number; that one was selected, and the two with their muskets made their way to the cornfield. After



arriving there, they stopped and listened awhile, and soon heard the bear at work at the corn. As soon as they had ascertained the bear's locality, Perry told his man to go to a certain point named by him, (Perry,) and shoot at the bear, and said, "if you kill him, very well; if you don't, the bear will be after you, and if he does, run behind me—I will stand here." The man did as directed by Perry, shot at the bear, wounded him and then ran towards Perry, the bear in a rage following. The man took shelter behind Perry, who stood quietly in his tracks until the bear had come up within twenty feet of him, when he raised his musket and snapped it, but there was no discharge. Mr. Perry began to curse his firelock, but rapidly continued to snap it until the bear had approached, walking on his hind feet, near enough to take the muzzle of the gun into his mouth, when the gun went off and, of course, killed the bear. In this affair, he did not appear to manifest any fear, or any other feeling except that he was vexed at his gun.

Mr. Perry acquired a good property—had eleven children, several of them are now living—one, Mrs. Atwater, now lives upon the place and in the house where her father lived and died. Though not a religious man, Mr. Perry, like Major Clough, gave liberally for the support of religious institutions. He was a member of the Congregational society. He died November 15th, 1824, at the age of 69.

James and Thomas McClure would seem to come next in the order of settlement. They were brothers, and were natives of Scotland; they landed in this country at Boston, Massachusetts; there were three brothers, and all came to Vermont, and first stopped at Wallingford. After a little time, the two brothers above named came to this place in 1779, looked this region over and finally concluded to settle in what is now the north-east part of the town—it was then in Ira, and they were induced to go there by representations of Isaac Clark, who had located there and had been made town clerk of Ira. Clark represented to them that the village of Ira would be there. The place where the McClure's settled is now in Middletown, and near the line between Middletown and Ira. It is at the upper end of the road, which leaves



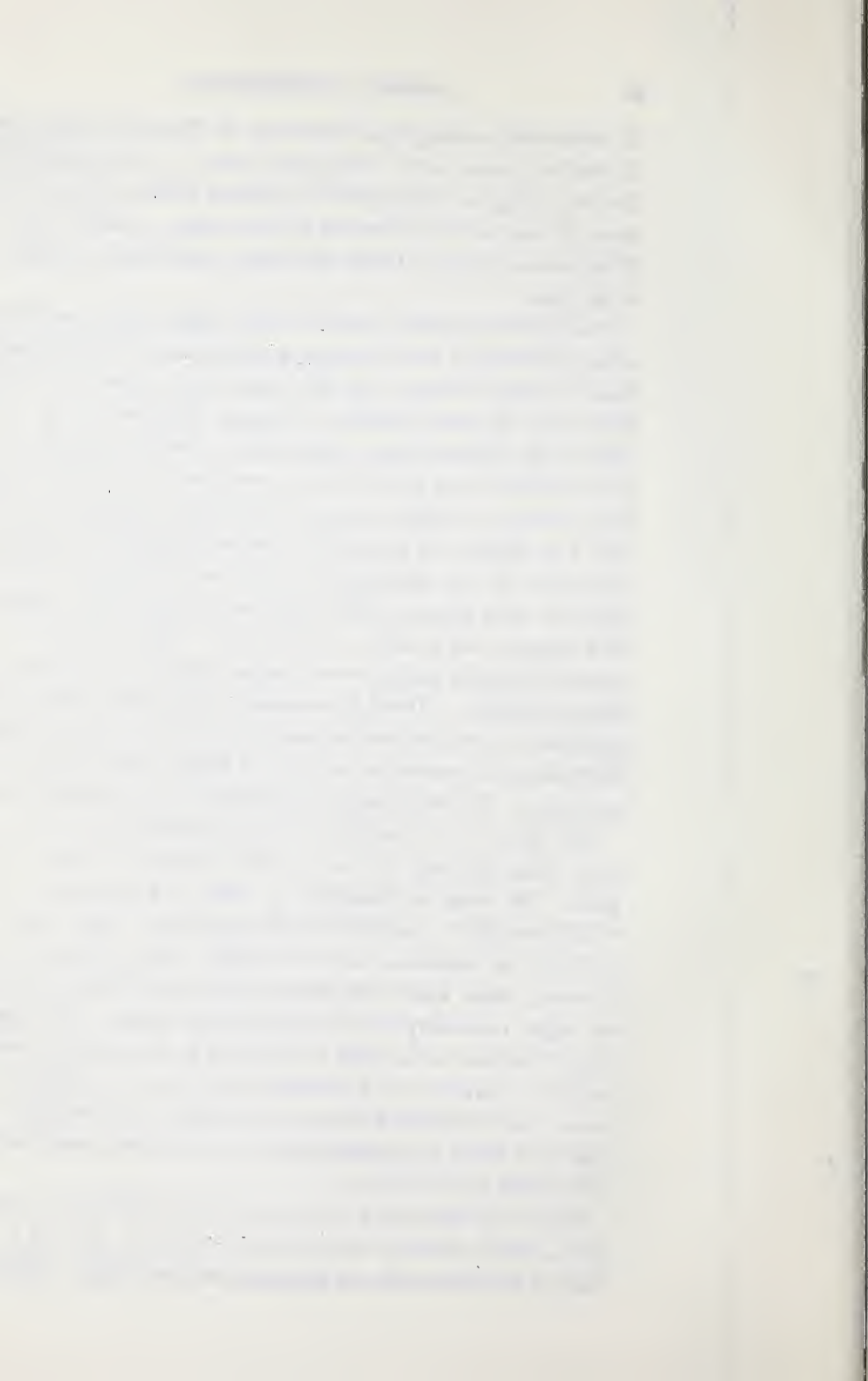


the main road, running from Middletown to Tinmouth, a little east of what is known as the "Edgerton place." It is not probable that any village or central place of business would ever have been there, if that portion of Ira had not been taken to make a part of Middletown—however, Clark and others undoubtedly thought so at the time.

The McClure brothers, like the other early settlers, set themselves resolutely at work clearing up their lands,—I should judge, from the early records, that they were much relied on, as they held many important positions. Thomas McClure was the first clerk of the Baptist Church, which office he held for several years. James McClure was placed on the committee at the first annual town meeting, to divide the town into school districts—he often held town offices, and seemed to be actively engaged in laying the foundation of the institutions in the new settlement. James McClure, died February 22d, 1815, at the age of 67; Thomas, died younger, and sometime before 1800. Each left families; of James McClure's family, were Doctor David G. McClure and Samuel McClure. David G. succeeded Doctor Ezra Clark, as a physician in town, and was in practice here several years prior to 1822, when he removed to the State of Ohio. He has been dead some years. He left a family of a good deal of talent and enterprise.

The history of "Old Rifle" more properly belongs to some other town, although he was on our territory for about seven years. He went to Castleton in 1786, and remained on the "McClure Hill" from 1779 until that time. There are some incidents in connection with his family while residing on the territory, which afterwards became a part of Middletown, which we might reasonably claim as part of our history. Mr. Clark's wife, if she was not as good a marksman as her husband, was not behind in bravery; on a Sabbath day, when her husband was absent, she discovered a bear in the cornfield, she took that same rifle with which her husband had won his name, went out and deliberately shot the bear.

Samuel McClure was a farmer and lived in Middletown until his death, which occurred about fifteen years ago. He had a large family; three sons and two daughters are now living. David G.,



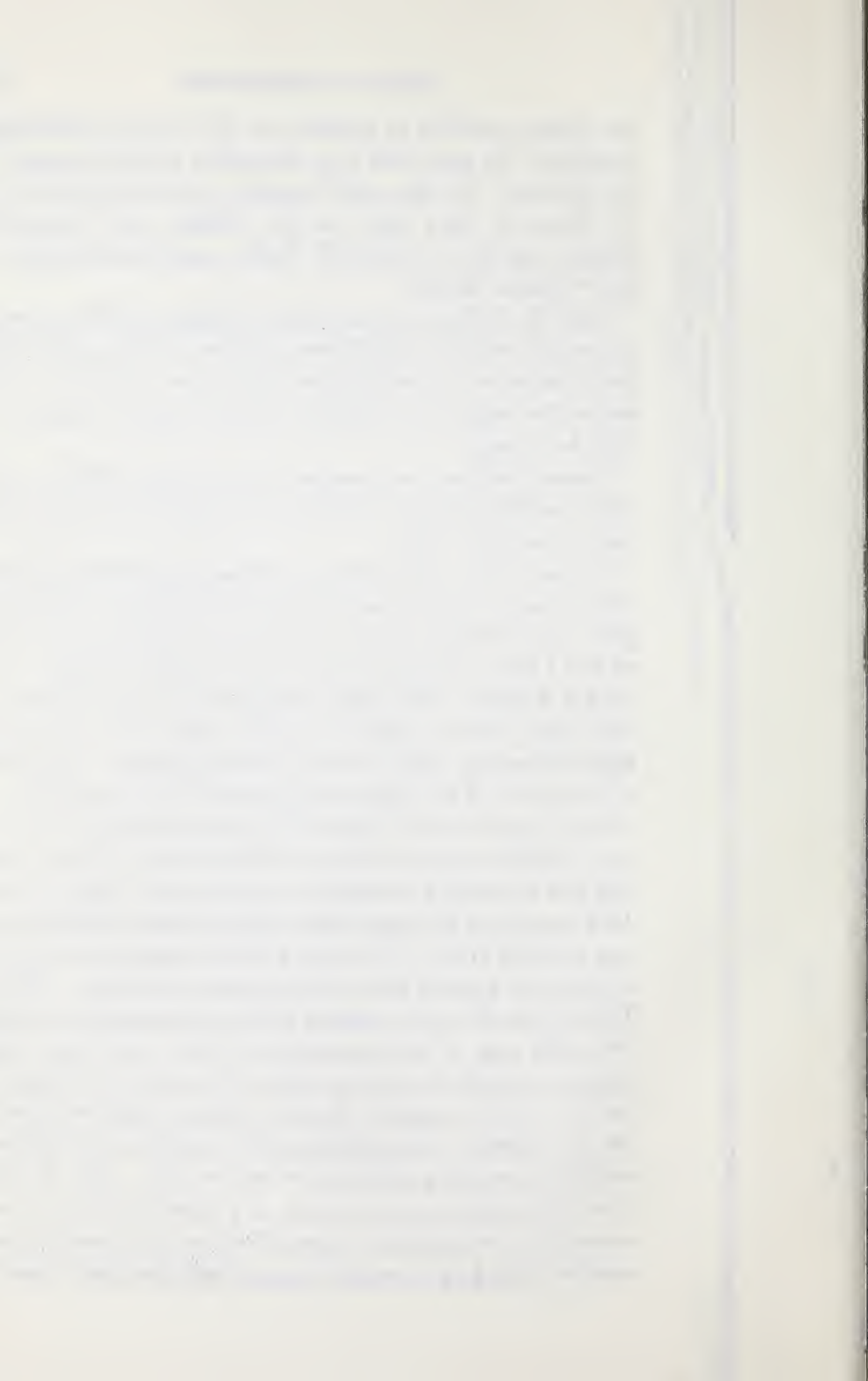


the oldest, now lives in Rutland; he had two sons and three daughters; the sons, both have responsible positions on some of the railroads. The two oldest daughters are married—one to C. M. Haven, a route agent on the Rutland and Washington railroad; the other to Albert H. Tuttle, one of the proprietors of the "Rutland Herald."

Harry B. McClure, the second son of Samuel McClure, always has and still resides in Middletown, and has for many years been one of the active and leading men of the town. He has a very respectable family of six children, all boys, and all disposed to work for a living.

Warren McClure, the youngest son of Samuel McClure, also resides in Middletown, is a mechanic—he served his country three years in the war of 1861.

The next in the order of time of settlement, was William Frisbie, whose name, it will be seen, is on the roll of 1785. His native place was Bethlehem, Conn.; to this place, and Harwinton, Conn., all that I have ever known of the name, trace their ancestry. He lived in Stillwater, New York, for a good many years before he came here—all his children were born there. He was in the battle of Saratoga, which was near his then residence. A relative of his was one of the original proprietors of the town of Wells, of whom he purchased his land, and his family consisting of his wife and six children, and his effects he brought here on an ox sled. The land he bought was what is now known as the "Buxton farm." He first put up a log house in the vicinity of where the brick house now is, and in 1785 or '86 he built a frame house three or four rods a little north of west of where the brick house now stands. William Frisbie, from all we have learned of him, was somewhat eccentric, but unlike some of his descendants, he was a very active man; prompt and positive in the expression of his opinions, and fearlessly uttered whatever came into his mind, whoever might be present. He was inflexible and unyielding in his principles, and could not endure any wavering on the part of any one else. The old folks have told me that, on one occasion, in a church meeting, he was unusually severe upon some wayward brother, when some one present felt it his duty to rebuke him, and told him that it was his



duty to exercise charity towards the offending brother. His reply was that "charity could not go without legs." William Frisbie died March 1st, 1813, at the age of 76. He had two sons and four daughters, two of his daughters died before he did. His oldest son, William, Jr., was 17 years old when his father came here. He had the reputation of being a good scholar and well educated for the time. He studied medicine with Doctor Ezra Clark, and after he had received his diploma, commenced practice in company with Doctor Clark in Middletown, but soon went to Pittsford, Vt., where he was in practice until about 1820. He was in practice in Pittsford, according to the best of our information, about 25 years. He removed from Pittsford to Phelps, N. Y., where he lived until his death, which occurred about the year 1837. He had the reputation of being a good physician, had a large practice in Pittsford, and as I have been informed by the old people in that town, was highly esteemed by all who knew him. Some of his descendants are now living in Phelps, others are in the Western States, and all seem to have traits of character similar to those of the older William Frisbie. Zenas Frisbie, the second son of William, Sr., was a farmer, lived and died in Middletown,—his age was 76 years—he died January 19th, 1851. He had eight children, three are dead; of the surviving, two sons and a daughter are at the far West, one son in Poultney, and a daughter, Mrs. Lucy A. Thomas, in Middletown, who is the only one left here of the race.

I cannot any further take up the names on that roll in the order of time when they settled here. I shall next speak of Captain Joseph Spaulding, a name ever to be honored by Middletown. He first settled on what has been known as the "Micah Vail farm," now owned by C. Clift, but soon afterwards removed to where Deacon A. Spaulding now lives, which place has ever since been owned by him and his descendants. It has already appeared that Captain Spaulding was the leading spirit "in getting the town established." He was the surveyor who located the lines, and gave the town its name. The town, very properly, made him their first representative. He was about thirty-six years old when he came here, had taught school a good deal in Connecticut, and was





in the revolutionary war from about the time of its commencement until about the time he came to this place. He held some office in his regiment which ranked with lieutenant, and for awhile he performed the duties of adjutant. He taught the first school in the town, and taught a good many schools after that; he taught in all during his life nearly forty winter schools, the last when he was over seventy-five years old. He was the first captain of the militia in town, and held that office at the time of the Shays' rebellion, in 1786, and when the militia of the county were called on to sustain the courts at Rutland, he started with his company for that place; but on his arrival at Castleton was permitted to return, as the mob had been dispersed by militia nearer at hand. He was a very candid, judicious man, no appearance of vanity or ostentation about him; yet he was firm in his convictions, and decided in his opinions. He had not as much of the go-ahead in him as many others of the early settlers; but he was, probably, the best educated of any of them, and the most capable for transacting business. Those of my age can recollect him well. The last time that I saw him, in my recollection, was on the Sabbath at church, which, I think, was not many months before his death. During the recess of service, I saw him take up a book and read without the use of spectacles; and on the same occasion myself and others engaged with him in conversation. He was then the same candid, intelligent, christian man. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Captain Spaulding died February 25th, 1840, at the great age of ninety-six years.

Deacon Asahel Spaulding and Harley Spaulding, now living here, and Deacon Julius Spaulding, of Poultney, with their families, are now the only representatives left in Vermont of several numerous families who sprung from Captain Joseph Spaulding.

Jonathan Brewster settled on the farm now owned by Doctor Eliakim Paul, about one and one-half miles south of the village. The exact time when he came here cannot now be given; but from records we have found, we know it was as early as 1782. He was very active, and the acknowledged leader in the formation of the congregational church, and was its first deacon,





and continued to act in that capacity until the infirmities of age prevented. He represented the town four years. Deacon Jonathan Brewster died April 29th, 1820, at the age of seventy-six. On the stone at the head of the grave, we find this quotation: "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." From what we have learned of him, we think it appropriately used. He was a very devoted man, and very laborious in the discharge of his duties as a member and officer of the church, of which we shall speak more fully when we come to the history of the churches.

Deacon Brewster had a large family of children, seven of whom survived him. Their names were Orson, Ohel, Oramel and Jonathan, Eunice, Lydia and Joanna. Orson was a valuable man. He succeeded his father in the office of deacon, which he held until the spring of 1835, when he removed to Northampton, Mass., where he died a few years since at about the age of eighty years.

Ohel died many years ago. He left two daughters, one of whom is dead; the other was the widow of the late Orson Clark, now the wife of Doctor Amos Frisbie, formerly of Poultney, now of Findlay, Ohio.

Jonathan and Oramel removed to Northern New York, and died there many years ago.

The daughters of Deacon Jonathan Brewster were excellent women. Eunice married Fitch Loomis. She was the mother of Reuben and Fitch Loomis, Jr., Mrs. Henry Gray, Mrs. Thaddeus Terrill and Mrs. Johnson. She died about 1851.

Lydia married William Fay, long the proprietor of the "Rutland Herald." She survived her husband some years.

Joanna married Luther Cleaveland, and lived to be very old. She has been dead but a short time. She died in Pawlet.

Gideon Miner removed from Woodbury, Connecticut, to Rutland in March, 1779, and from Rutland to Middletown in the spring of 1782. He settled about two miles east of the village, at the place formerly known as "Miner's Mills," where Merritt Mehurin now lives. He commenced at once in putting up a grist and saw mill, which were made ready for use that season. These were the first mills erected within the limits of the town, or at



least the first that did any business, and were of great service to the new settlement. Mr. Miner had been a soldier in the French war, and lost his health there, which he never fully recovered, yet he lived to a great age. His wife, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Lewis, was a woman of uncommon ability, and great energy of character. She was held in high esteem by all who knew her, and was a noble type of those pioneer mothers who have stamped so proud a character upon the people of this state. She and her husband, and nearly or quite all of their children, were members of the congregational church. Mr. Miner died in 1808, and his wife soon after, each being, at their death, eighty years old.

Abigail, their oldest child, married Thomas Davidson, who died young, leaving his widow two sons, Gideon M. and Clement. Gideon M. Davidson removed to Saratoga Springs in 1817, where he still resides, and is a man of wealth and influence. Clement Davison was for many years a jeweller in New York, but now resides in Connecticut. Abigail, their mother, died at Saratoga in 1843, at the age of seventy-eight.

Samuel Lewis Miner, the oldest son, removed to Castleton in early life. He died in 1817, at the age of fifty. He left three children, Roxena, then Mrs. Doctor Kellogg, Cyrena, since the widow of a Mr. Armstrong, and Lewis. Mrs. Kellogg died in Georgia in 1851. Lewis died in Castleton in 1852. Mrs. Armstrong still lives in Castleton.

Captain Joel Miner was the third child. He was a man of rare mental capacity, and, for his time, did an extensive business. He was not a lawyer by profession, yet he had quite an extensive law business. He was a prominent and leading man in this town until his death. He would have been a leading man in any place. Captain Miner died suddenly at Montpelier, while attending a session of the Legislature, in the fall of 1813, at the age of forty-four. He left several children, two of whom became distinguished clergymen. Ovid, his eldest, first became a printer, under the late William Fay. He established the "Vermont Statesman," at Castleton, in 1826, which he published a few years, and then published a paper at Middlebury for awhile. He entered the ministry in 1823, and has since been in that avocation. He is now



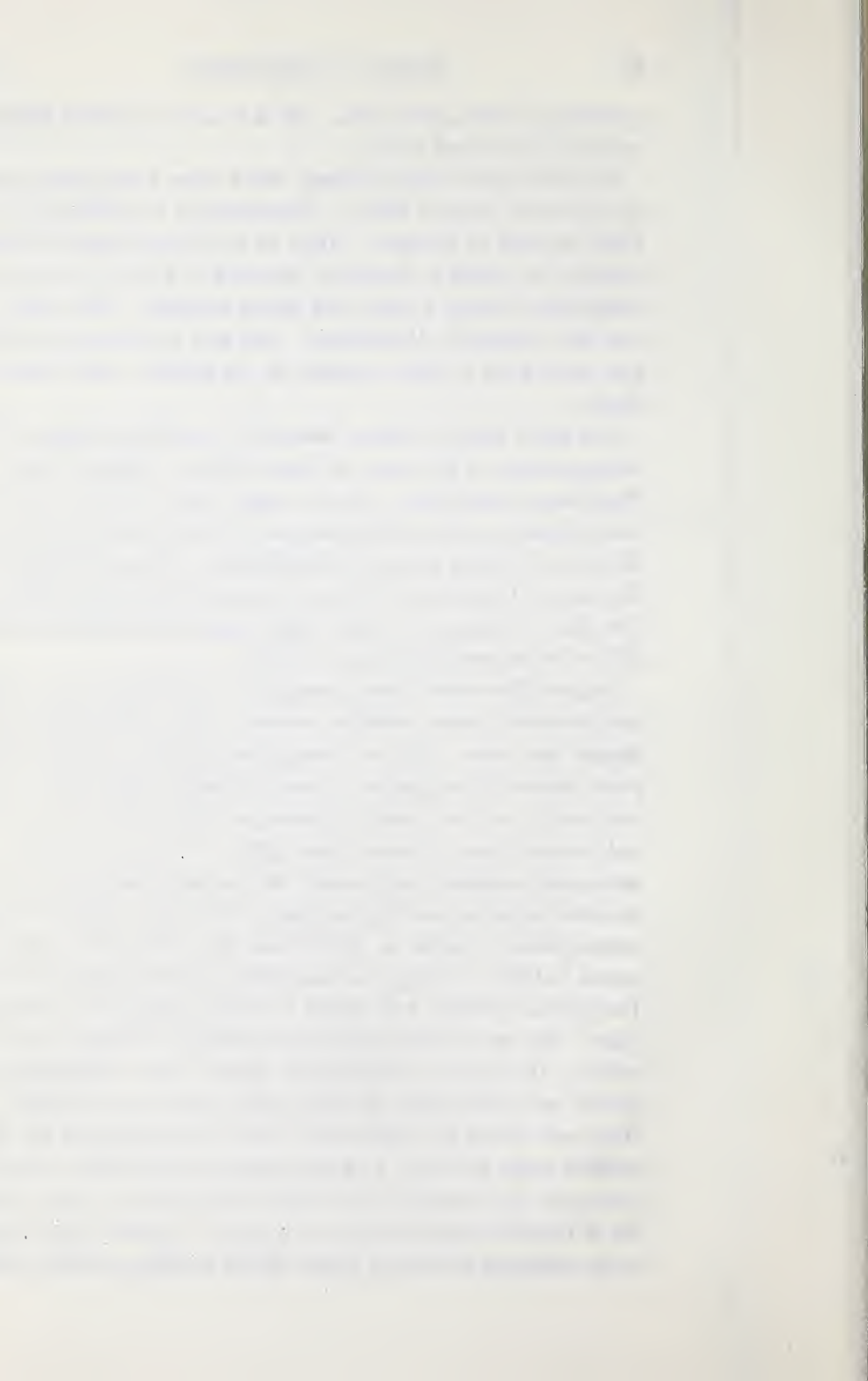


preaching at Illion, New York. He is a man of decided ability, and very earnest and zealous.

The other son of Captain Miner, who became a clergyman, was the lamented Lamson Miner. He graduated at Middlebury, in 1833, the first in his class. After he had fitted himself for the ministry, he settled in Cornwall. He died in 1841, at the age of thirty-three, leaving a widow and infant daughter. His widow is now Mrs. Leavitt, of Middlebury. Few men in the state, of his age, have held a higher position in the ministry than Lamson Miner.

The fourth child of Gideon Miner, Sr., was Gideon Miner, Jr., so long known in this town as Deacon Miner. He was born in Woodbury, Connecticut, and was eight years old the day his fathers family arrived at Rutland, and of course was eleven years old when the family removed to Middletown. He married Rachel Davison in December, 1793, and by her had eleven children. One died in infancy, two others died young, the remaining eight all lived to be married and have children.

Deacon Miner was in many respects a remarkable man. Few men possessed a more retentive memory—he could always give chapter and verse. He, too, though not a lawyer, was for many years frequently engaged as counsel in justice trials in this town and vicinity, and was usually opposed, in those trials, to his long and intimate friend, General Jonas Clark. He was very fond of music, and constantly led the choir for over sixty years, even up to the third Sabbath preceding his death. He was a deacon of the congregational church in Middletown for nearly forty years; moved to Ohio in 1834; was immediately elected an elder of the Presbyterian church, and served in that capacity about twenty years. He was seldom absent from meeting, as many of us can testify. He was the acknowledged leader in the congregational church and society here for many years prior to his removal to Ohio, and seldom has there been a man more competent for the position which he held. Few men, and we may include clergymen, were more familiar with the bible than he was, or more capable of explaining and enforcing its doctrines. Deacon Miner died at the residence of his son, Doctor Erwin L. Miner, in Ohio, with





whom he had resided, in 1854, at the age of eighty-four. Doctor Miner was the oldest of his eight children before mentioned. He studied medicine with Doctor Ezra Clark, whose daughter he married, and removed to the state of Ohio soon after, where he still resides, a man of wealth and influence.

Ahiman Lewis Miner, the next child of Deacon Miner now living, well known in this part of the state as A. L. Miner, now resides in Manchester, and is the only representative of the name in Vermont, except his own children, and one or two children of Lewis Miner, of Castleton. He worked on his father's farm until he was of age, then fitted for the sophomore class in college, at Castleton. He did not enter college, but studied law in the office of Mallary & Warner, in Poultney, and one year with Royce & Hodges, in Rutland, and was admitted to the bar in 1832, and commenced practice at Wallingford. He removed from there to Manchester in 1835, where he has since resided. He has been twice married, and has had eight children. His eldest son, Henry E., died December, 1863. He was a young man of much promise, and was his father's partner in law business.

A. L. Miner has been eight years probate register and three years probate judge of his district; two years clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives, nine years a member of the House or Senate, five years State's Attorney in Bennington County, and two years a member of Congress from this district. Mr. Miner has done, for many years, and is now doing an extensive business in his profession. He is an excellent citizen, a social, kind and true-hearted man; much esteemed by all who know him, and especially by the people of his native town. Between him and them there is a strong and enduring attachment.

The other two survivors of Deacon Miner's children are Chloe and Malvina. Chloe is a widow, and resides in the state of Ohio. Malvina married a clergyman, and lives in Missouri.

Of Deacon Miner's children not living, there were two daughters. One married Hiram Mahurin, and removed to Onandaga County, New York. She has been dead but a short time. The other married A. W. Hubbard; moved to the state of Ohio, and died in 1858.



Of the sons, Orlin H. moved to the state of Ohio in 1834, and died in 1836, aged thirty-six. He left four children; the oldest, Orlin H., Jr., now resides in Springfield, Illinois, and is State Auditor. He was an intimate friend of President Lincoln, and stands high as a public man in that state.

Thomas Davison Miner, the last named of the eight children of Deacon Miner, died in the state of Ohio, in 1856, at the age of forty-eight, leaving a large family. With the four children of Deacon Miner, now living, he has over thirty grand children, and over fifty great grand children, living.

Next to the deacon, of Gideon Miner, Sr.'s, children, was Ase-nath, who married Alexander Murray. They moved to Albany, New York, where he died young. Lamson, the next, died in 1806.

The youngest child of Gideon Miner, Sr., Elizabeth, was born in Woodbury, in the fall of 1778, and was but a little over three years old when her father removed to Middletown. She married the late Moses Copeland, and had four children—Lucius, Martin, Betsey and Edwin. Lucius and Edwin have remained in Middletown, and for the last twenty or twenty-five years have been among the prominent and leading citizens here. Lucius has resided near the centre of the town, and by his superior financial capacity has made himself useful to the town, to the congregational society of which he was a member, and to the citizens individually. He has at heart the interests of the town, and the interests of its institutions. Martin Copeland became a lawyer, and went to Bristol, Vermont. After a practice of several years at that place, he died there January 11th, 1861, at the age of forty-seven. Betsey married Deacon Julius Spaulding, and died in Poultney in 1805. Moses Copeland, their father, died May 3d, 1858, at the age of eighty-eight; and his widow, Elizabeth, the youngest and last survivor of Gideon Miner, Sr.'s, children, died in Poultney at the residence of Deacon Spaulding, her son-in-law, in the fall of 1866.

It is, perhaps, here proper to say, that the traits of character which distinguished the Miner family, are found in nearly all their descendants. The children of the females, who take other names,

the first of these is the fact that the system is not self-sufficient. It is necessary to have a large number of people to maintain it, and this is a very expensive proposition. The second is that the system is not very flexible. It is difficult to change the system if the needs of the community change. The third is that the system is not very efficient. It takes a long time to get things done, and there is a lot of waste.

There are many other problems with the system, but these are the most serious. The system is not self-sufficient, it is not flexible, and it is not efficient. These are the main reasons why the system is not working very well.

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are Miners, and nearly all are marked by energy, a retentive memory, fluency of speech, are easy to learn, and perhaps without an exception, both the dead and living, have sustained good moral characters, and been useful citizens.

Caleb Smith, whose name appears on the roll of 1785, we think must have been here as early as 1783, and perhaps earlier. He settled on the place now owned by Elijah Ross, Esq., known as the "Allen Vail farm." He built the house now standing there, which is one of the oldest houses in town. He was very efficient in establishing the Baptist Church, and was its first moderator, and the first deacon—the latter office he held until his death. He was also the first town treasurer.

Deacon Smith was an exemplary man, faithful and reliable, and of great service in laying the foundation of the Baptist Church here. He died February 10th, 1808, at the age of fifty-nine. He left one son, Jedediah Smith, who removed to Western New York since 1835, and one daughter, who married Roswell Tillie of Timmouth. She died some years ago; she was the mother of Ezra T. Tillie, now living in Pawlet, and Erwin E. Tillie, now of Danby.

Gamaliel Waldo first settled in Pownal in this state, and was there during the Revolutionary War. After the taking of Ticonderoga by the Green Mountain Boys under Allen, and before that post was evacuated by the Americans in 1777, Mr. Waldo was employed to carry provisions to the garrison at Ticonderoga, a duty more perilous probably than the battle field. He used oxen in carrying his provisions, and on one occasion, he put his oxen into a boat on the Vermont side of the lake, to take them across to the fort, but on the way, they jumped overboard into the lake, and swam back to the Vermont shore; they were afterwards rescued and saved.

Mr. Waldo came to this place as early as 1782. He found his way from Pawlet by marked trees, and so did the other settlers of his time. He settled on the place now owned by Mr. Hurlbert, cleared up that farm and lived there until his death, which occurred in 1829. Mr. Waldo was a resolute, fearless man, but a good neighbor, and a faithful member of the Baptist Church, and one of





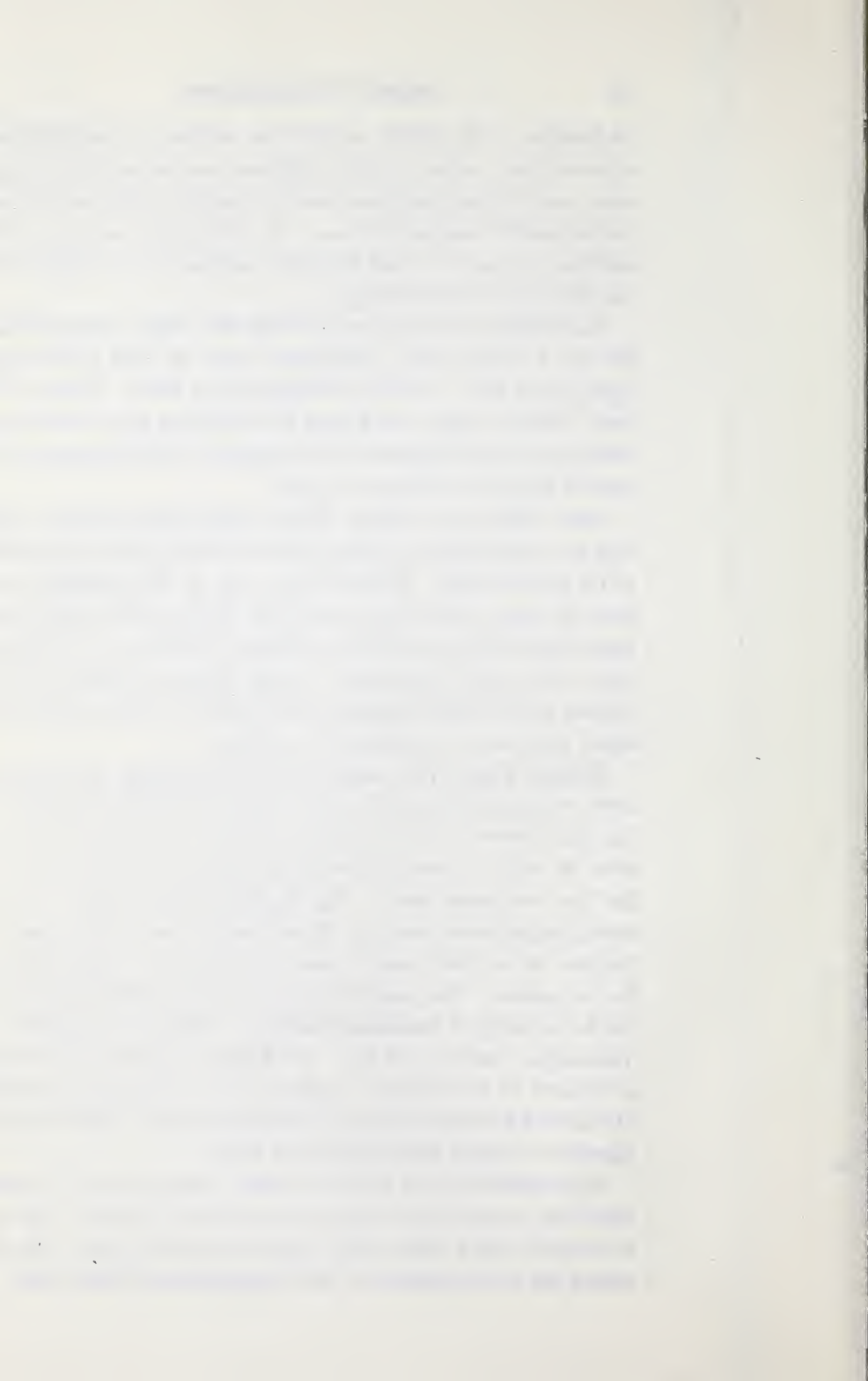
its founders. Mr. Waldo married the mother of Asa Gardner, who was then a widow with five children, one son and four daughters; one of those daughters married the Rev. Sylvanus Haynes, the first settled minister in town. Mr. Waldo also had by her five children, one son and four daughters, and one of those daughters was the wife of Stephen Keyes.

Asa Gardner was ten years old when the family removed here. He was a hard-working, industrious man; he lived to be nearly eighty years old. He died in Middletown in 1849. Three of his sons, Charles, Almer and Daniel R., still reside here, are already among the oldest inhabitants, and among the best examples in the town of industry, economy and thrift.

Asher Blunt and Nathan Walton came here about the same time Mr. Waldo did, and settled north of him, on the road leading to Ira over the hills. Mr. Blunt was one of the substantial men here for some years, but removed to Northern New York quite early, and but little is now known of him or his family. Mr. Walton was a very good man, raised a large family, and died in 1829. He was out of health for some years before he died, which diminished, somewhat, his usefulness as a citizen.

Edmund Bigelow, the moderator of the meeting at which the town was organized, and the first Justice of the Peace, settled at the place where John P. Taylor now lives, a locality which will ever be held in remembrance by the writer, as a large portion of his life was spent there. Mr. Bigelow seems to have been the acting magistrate in town for fifteen years or more subsequent to the time of his first election, and to have been a competent man for his position. The year of his death we are unable to ascertain. He left a family of considerable ability. The late Dr. Bigelow of Bennington, was a son of his. Dr. Bigelow was some years since a Senator in the Vermont Legislature from Bennington County. He married Dorinda Brewster, who survives him. She is the only survivor of Deacon Orson Brewster's family.

Joseph Rockwell, the first town clerk, settled where E. Prindle now lives, between the village and the Allen Vail farm. He was a competent town clerk, as the early records will show. He was among the first members of the Congregational Church, said to



have been a quiet, candid and sensible man, though not as active and energetic as many others. The late Solomon Rockwell was his son. There are none of his descendants living here, but some are living in St. Lawrence County, N. Y., who, we are informed are worthy citizens.

John and Samuel Sunderlin settled north of the village. Samuel, I think, on the place recently owned by Mrs. Germond, not far from Mr. Harvey Leffingwell. John Sunderlin was made a Lieutenant under Capt. Spaulding, when the militia were organized. He was a man of real worth and had a very respectable family. Mrs. Leffingwell, widow of Dyer Leffingwell, also the widow of Ohei Brewster were his daughters. The most of us remember her as an excellent woman. She has been dead but a few years.

Daniel Sunderlin, a son of John, married Nancy Stoddard. Erwin and Edwin Sunderlin, who succeeded Merritt and Horace Clark as merchants here, were sons of his.

John Sunderlin died about the year 1826, on the farm now owned by the estate of Whitney Merrill, and occupied by William Dayton. Samuel Sunderlin, after residing here a few years, removed to Shoreham, where he lived and died at an advanced age. He had a family of several children. John was born in Middletown in 1784. He spent the greater portion of his life in Shoreham, but returned to Middletown to live with his daughter, Mrs. Deacon Haynes, some few years before his decease. He died March 11th, 1862, at the age of seventy-eight. The Rev. Byron Sunderlin, a distinguished clergyman at Washington, D. C., is a grandson of Samuel Sunderlin.

Increase Rudd settled upon the farm now occupied by Mrs. Aden H. Green, known as the "Bigelow farm." He had a large family, and his descendants were numerous, but long since have removed from here, with the exception of Mr. Eli Rudd, who is the only one left.

Gideon Buel, Jonathan and David Griswold all settled on the road, or what is now the road, leading from "Miner's Mills" to the Huskins' place, where Deacon Haynes now lives. They were all soldiers of the revolution. Mr. Buel and David Griswold each drew a pension while they lived.





Mr. Buel had several children. Roswell, who represented the town two years, has recently died; Mrs. Marcus Stoddard, and another son who removed west in early life.

Roswell Buel, Jr., a grandson of Gideon Buel, is his only representative left in Vermont. He is a lawyer; was admitted to Rutland County Bar in 1845, but has not been much in practice for some years. Roswell Buel, Sr., had three sons. Ezekiel, the second, is a physician; has had a good practice in his profession in New Philadelphia, Ohio, for the last twenty years and over. He was a surgeon of one of the Ohio regiments through the war of 1861. He has acquired a good property, and is respected. The third son, Napoleon B., was one of the volunteers from Middletown in the late war, and was killed in one of the battles before Petersburg.

Jonathan Griswold removed from the place where he first settled, which has recently been known as the Cole farm, formerly the Roger farm, to a place above where Reuben Mehurin now lives. From the early records we should regard him as having faithfully performed his duty in the new settlement. He died much younger than his brother David. Of his family we have been able to learn but little. He had a son, Jonathan, who met his death under circumstances sad and painful. He was accidentally killed on a "training day," in June, 1816. He was then an officer in the company of militia. The accident occurred in the latter part of the day, after the company had been discharged. A company had collected in the ball room of the present hotel for a dance. The members of the militia company, without form or order, were saluting them by discharging their muskets, heavily loaded with powder, in front of the hotel, and during these exercises Griswold received the contents of a musket discharged within a few feet of his head, which killed him instantly. The affair cast a gloom over the people of Middletown, and for a long time the foolish practice of firing on training days was almost wholly abandoned; and so long as the militia trainings were continued, the fathers and mothers, as their sons started on the morning of the first Tuesday of June "to go to training," as a matter



of caution, would rehearse to them the fate of "poor Jonathan Griswold."

David Griswold lived to December 10th, 1842, and was ninety-three years old when he died. His children all removed from this town many years ago, except his son David. He married Emily Paul, a daughter of Stephen Paul, and sister of Doctor Eliakim Paul. David, Jr., died some eight years ago. He left five children, one son and four daughters. The son, Stephen Angelo, enlisted in the 7th Vermont regiment, and lost his life in Florida. His mother and younger sisters reside on the old homestead.

Jonathan Frisbie was a brother of William Frisbie, and settled where Jehiel Parks now lives. He was a man of less energy, and not as excitable as his brother. He had several children, most of whom died young. He died before his brother, and it is not known that any of his descendants are now living.

Benj. Coy went to Timmouth before the revolutionary war, but left after that commenced, and when he returned, after the close of the war, settled in this town, where his grandson, Charles P. Coy, now resides. He was an industrious man, frugal, honest, and successfully made his way to comfort and independence. Mr. Coy had a large family of children. Three of them, Ebenezer Coy, Mrs. Charles Gardner, and another daughter, are still living. Mrs. Gardner still resides in this town. Martin H. and Charles P. Coy, the sons of Reuben Coy, who was a son of Benjamin, now resides here, and are of that class of men with whom may be safely trusted the interests of the town. Men of intelligence, integrity and good moral principles—if we may so say, a middling class, upon whom, I have often thought, is our great reliance in this country.

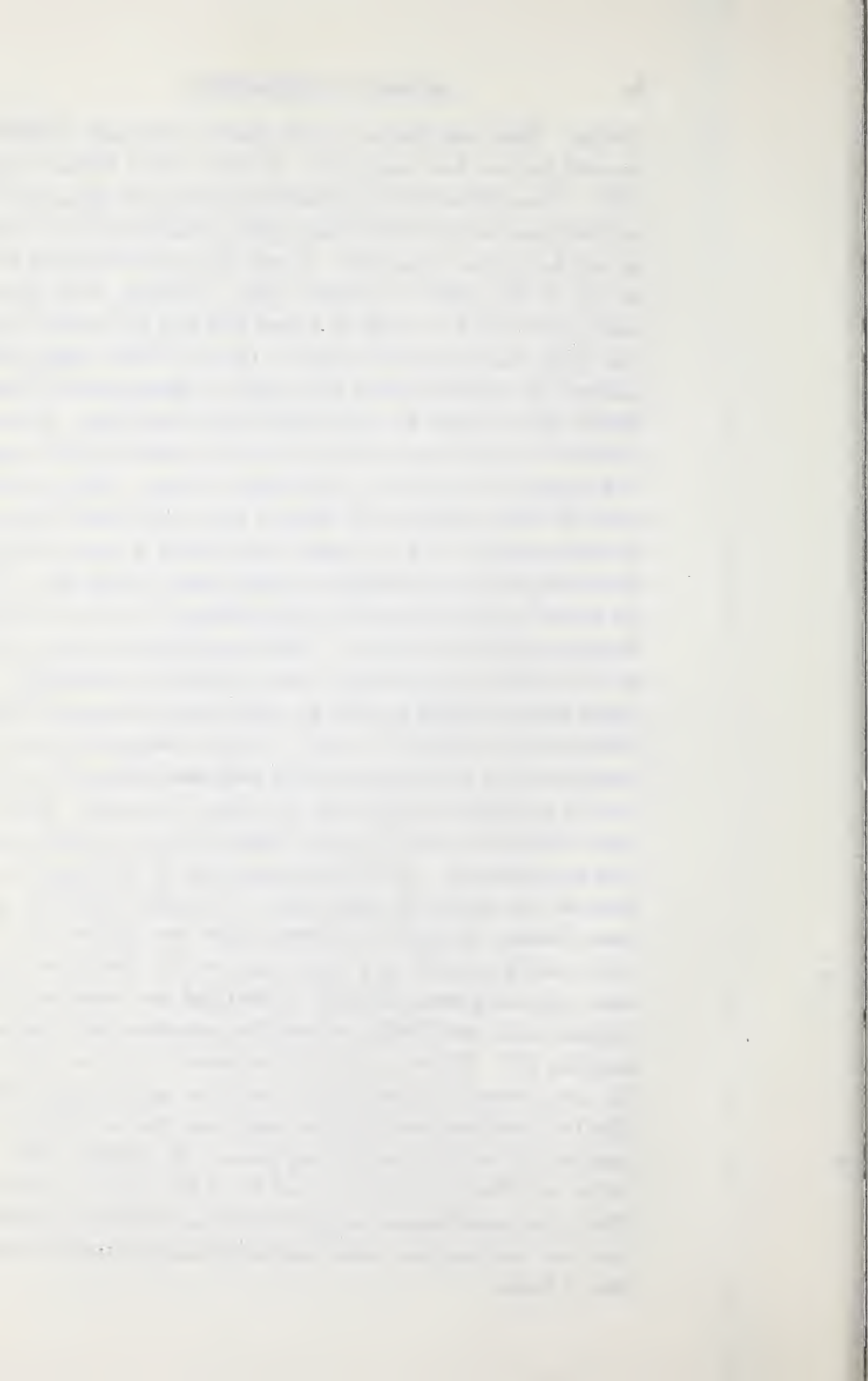
Francis Perkins was a soldier in the revolution, and served nearly through the entire time. He was from New London, Conn. He first located himself where John Lewis now lives, but afterwards, about 1786, removed below there where Mr. Charles Gardner now lives, and there resided until his death. Mr. Perkins first cleared up a spot, and put up a log house, and covered it with bark and hemlock boughs, and for a door he hung up a





blanket. There was then no sawed timber to be had. Miner's saw mill had not been completed. He then had a wife and one child. He subsisted the first summer, in great part, upon greens and leaks, and commenced boiling green pumpkins to eat as soon as they had grown to any size. It was then very difficult for him or any of the settlers to procure grain. Morgan, Azor Perry and some few had so much of a start that they had raised their own grain, but not much to spare. Once or twice during this summer, Mr. Perkins carried some potash to Manchester, and purchased with that what he could bring home on his back. On one occasion he went down to Azor Perry's and worked for him a day, and received in payment a half bushel of grain. This he took upon his back, carried to Mr. Miner's grist mill, which had just got into operation, had it ground, and carried it home, making about nine miles travel, besides his days work, on that day. On his arrival home, he found his cabin deserted; his wife and child had gone, he knew not where. What to do he did not know; but as it was late in the evening, and very dark, he concluded he might content himself as best he could until morning, and then find his wife and child if he could. In the morning, as soon as it was light, Benj. Coy appeared at his cabin and informed him that his wife and child had staid with him (Coy) over night. Perkins went directly home with Coy, and found his wife and child there safe and unharmed. His wife then gave him the following, as the cause of her leaving the night before: Soon after dark their pig came running through the doorway under the blanket into the cabin closely pursued by a large bear, but the bear, from some cause (probably from the sight of fire), did not enter, but with his head under the blanket surveyed the apartment for a moment, and then left. She was very much frightened, took her child in her arms, started on a run for Mr. Coy's, the pig following—probably the most hazardous thing she could have done—but was not molested by the bear on her way there. Mr. Perkins, after his return with his wife, rolled up some logs before the door, went to Pawlet, got some boards, brought them home on his back, made a door, and said that ever after that he felt secure from the intrusion of bears.





Francis Perkins was an upright man, mild in his deportment, firm and inflexible in his principles, and was never known to deviate from what he regarded as honorable, just and right. In this respect he was like nearly all of the first settlers of the town, nor was he unlike them in the hardships, deprivations and dangers which he had to encounter after coming into this then forest. His experience is, perhaps, a little more striking, in that respect, than can be now related of many of them. Yet take away the bear story, and there is but little difference in what he had to endure, and that endured by most of the others who came here prior and during the year 1783. Nor was he alone beset with wild beasts. Many of the settlers had their hogs, sheep and calves killed by bears and wolves, and sometimes taken out of their yards, where they invariably kept their stock in the night time for some years after the settlement was commenced.

Mr. Perkins drew a pension of ninety-six dollars a year, and acquired a comfortable property. He died December 26th, 1844, at the age of eighty-six years. He has no descendants, to our knowledge, in Vermont.

Jonathan Haynes was, probably, the last man who came here before that roll was made. He came early in March, 1785. His son, Hezekiah, who lived in this town almost eighty years afterwards, was then five years old, and from him we have had an intelligible and, doubtless, true account of his father's history, also much of the early history of the town.

Jonathan Haynes was born in Massachusetts. His father had emigrated from England. The family are able to trace their ancestry back several generations to Jonathan Haynes, who was born in England in 1616. Jonathan Haynes, the subject of this sketch, removed from Haverhill, Mass., to Bennington, Vt., before the revolutionary war. His name appears on the roll of Captain Samuel Robinson's company, which is still preserved. That company was in the battle of Bennington. Mr. Haynes was severely wounded the first day of that battle. He received his wound at a time when the Americans were falling back to take a more advantageous position. A musket ball struck him under the left shoulder blade, passed through his body, and came out at his right



breast, and passed through his right arm near the wrist, which was at the time extended, in the act of ramming down the cartridge in his gun. This occurred about two o'clock in the afternoon. Not long afterwards, those who were sent out to pick up the wounded, came to Mr. Haynes and offered their assistance; but he told them he could live but a short time, that they had better look after those who could be saved. They left him; but as they came around about ten o'clock in the evening of the same day, to pick up the dead, they found Haynes still alive, and brought him in. Incredible as it may appear, he lived. It was not for him then to die, but to live, and to assist in laying the foundation of the institutions in this town, the benefit of which you and I have so long enjoyed.

Mr. Haynes, as we have seen, removed to this town in the early part of March, 1785. He put up a log house a few rods a little south of east of where the school house, in the south district, now stands, and on the opposite side of the road from the school house. The snow was then about four feet deep, but he shovelled it away, and in a short space of time had a cabin that he put his family into. He did not long remain here, but moved from thence up the hill about half a mile, to what has since and is now known as the Haynes' farm; that farm has been owned in the family ever since. Mr. Haynes was never well and strong after his wound at Bennington, yet he was able to do a good deal of work, accumulated quite a property, frequently held town offices, was a member of the baptist church, was chosen one of its deacons, but did not accept on account of his physical weakness. He died in Middletown May 13th, 1813, at the age of fifty-nine; almost thirty-six years after his terrible wound at Bennington. His widow died October 14th, 1841, and was eighty-four years old. Often, in the latter part of her life, we have heard her relate her trials at Bennington—how she was frightened when she saw that a battle must be fought; how she took her children on a horse and fled to Pownal to get out of danger. And then the first tidings she had was that her husband was slain, and when she returned and ascertained his real condition, supposed his wound was mortal; but she took care of him, and at the same time took



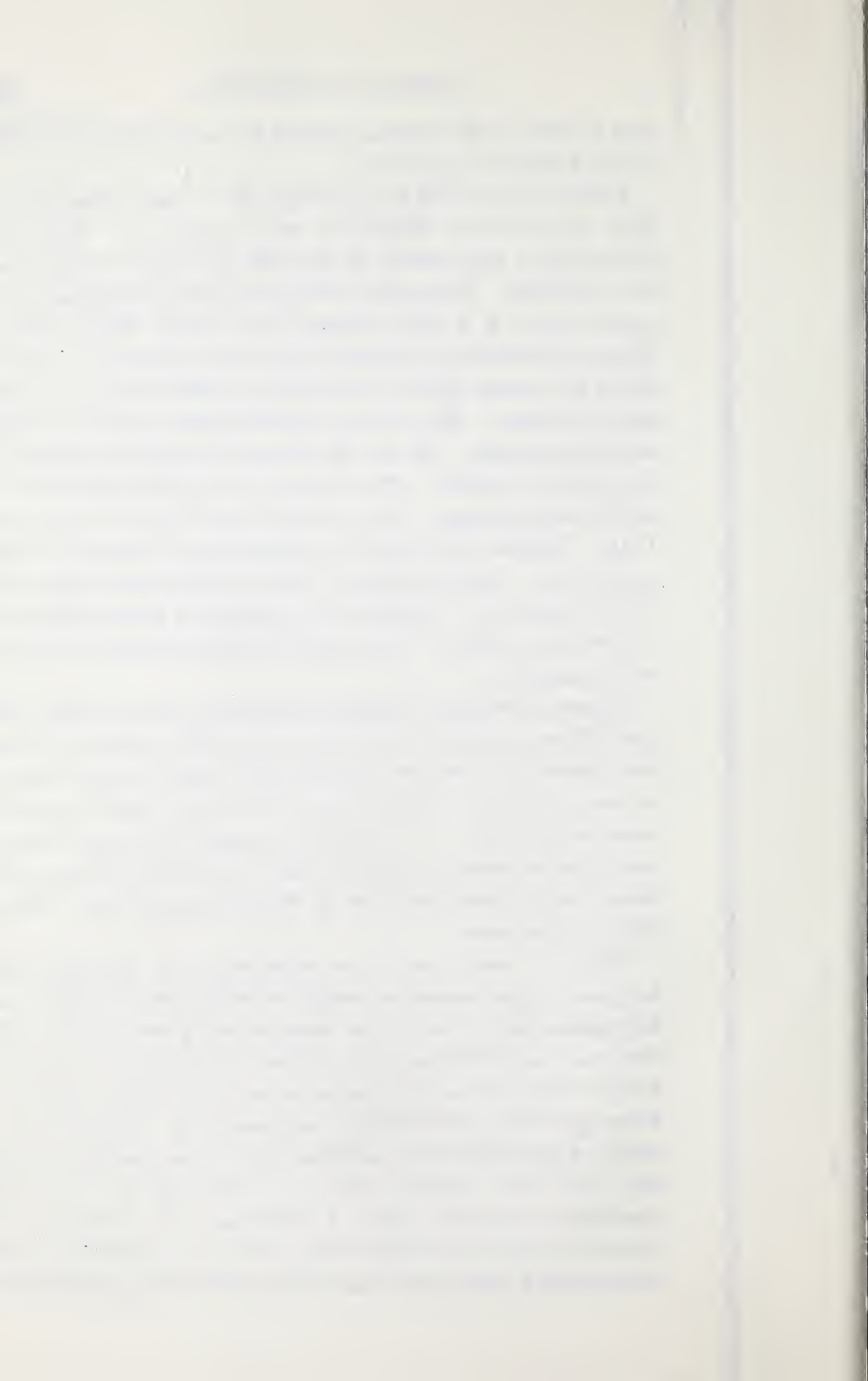


care of some of the Hessian wounded who were left in the hands of the Americans as prisoners.

Jonathan Haynes left a large family, all of whom, except Hese-kiah, removed from Middletown many years ago. Hezekiah Haynes had a large family, of whom six sons and two daughters are now living. The oldest, a daughter, lives in Michigan; the second, Aaron, is a baptist minister, and lives in Western New York; the second son, Alpheus, resides here, and has been a deacon of the baptist church since 1836; the third son, Arus, died some years since. He was also a baptist minister, and stood high in his denomination. He was for several years pastor of the baptist church in Rutland. The next two sons, Bacchus and Sylvanus H., are physicians. They received their diplomas as early as 1841. Bacchus is in practice at Rutland, and Sylvanus in his native town. Jonathan, the next son, is a farmer, and resides on the old homestead. Hezekiah, the youngest, is a mechanic, and resides in this village. The youngest daughter is also living here, and is unmarried.

Ephraim, Jacob and Philemon Wood, whose names appear on that roll, were among the active men of the first settlers; but we shall reserve what we have to say of them, until we come to give an account of the "Wood Scrape," so called, which happened about the year 1800. The others, not mentioned, whose names are on the roll were not long here, and very little is now known of them; most of them proved to be "good men and true" while they remained here.

Perhaps it would not be in accordance with the taste and judgment of good writers to occupy as much space as I shall in biographies, but it is one of *my* ways in giving you a history of the town; and if it is an error, it is one of judgment on my part, but one which will not be liable to do any harm to the present or future generations, provided facts only are given. To me, it is a matter of great interest to know the kind of men who cleared up and put under cultivation this once wilderness, and laid the foundation of society here. I would not over estimate the character and worth of those men, but in my opinion it was fortunate (if I may so say) that it was not for their grandchildren



to do the work which they did. With all our advantages at this advanced age, I honestly think we are inferior to our grandfathers and grandmothers, physically, morally and intellectually. The popular opinion that they surpassed us only in their physical strength and endurance, is a mistake. It is in their moral power that they appear to the best advantage; their zeal and steadfastness, their unbending energy, their devotion to principle, has not since been equalled—so I think.

I might here say that those men who came to this place soon after the spring of 1785, were of the same stamp; the Clarks, the Caswells, the Loomises, the Oatmans, Moses Leach, Russel Barber, and others, of whom I shall have more or less to say before I close.

The town early made provision for a burial ground. The first ground used for that purpose was owned by Increase Rudd—now owned by Mrs. Green, and lies nearly north and on the opposite side of the stream from the “nail factory.” There are appearances of graves there, but no monuments.

“At a town meeting, holden July 2d, 1787, Joseph Spaulding, moderator; Asher Blunt, Jonathan Brewster, Gideon Miner, Selah Hubbard and Jacob Wood, were chosen a committee to look out a spot for a burying ground.”

At an adjourned meeting, on the recommendation of that committee, it was “*Voted*, To purchase an acre of ground of Luther Filmore for that purpose.” “*Voted*, To raise one penny on the pound on the grand list of 1786, to be paid in wheat, at four shillings per bushel, by the first of September next.”

On the 30th of July, 1787, Mr. Filmore executed a deed of the acre to the town. We give the description from Mr. Filmore’s deed, as it locates the “old school house,” the first one built in the town:

“Beginning at the corner of the road, four rods west of the school house in the centre of the town at a stake and stones, thence running west sixteen rods, thence south ten rods to a stake and stones, thence sixteen rods to a stake and stones, thence ten rods to first mentioned bounds.”

Here, then, we have the time, the way and manner in which



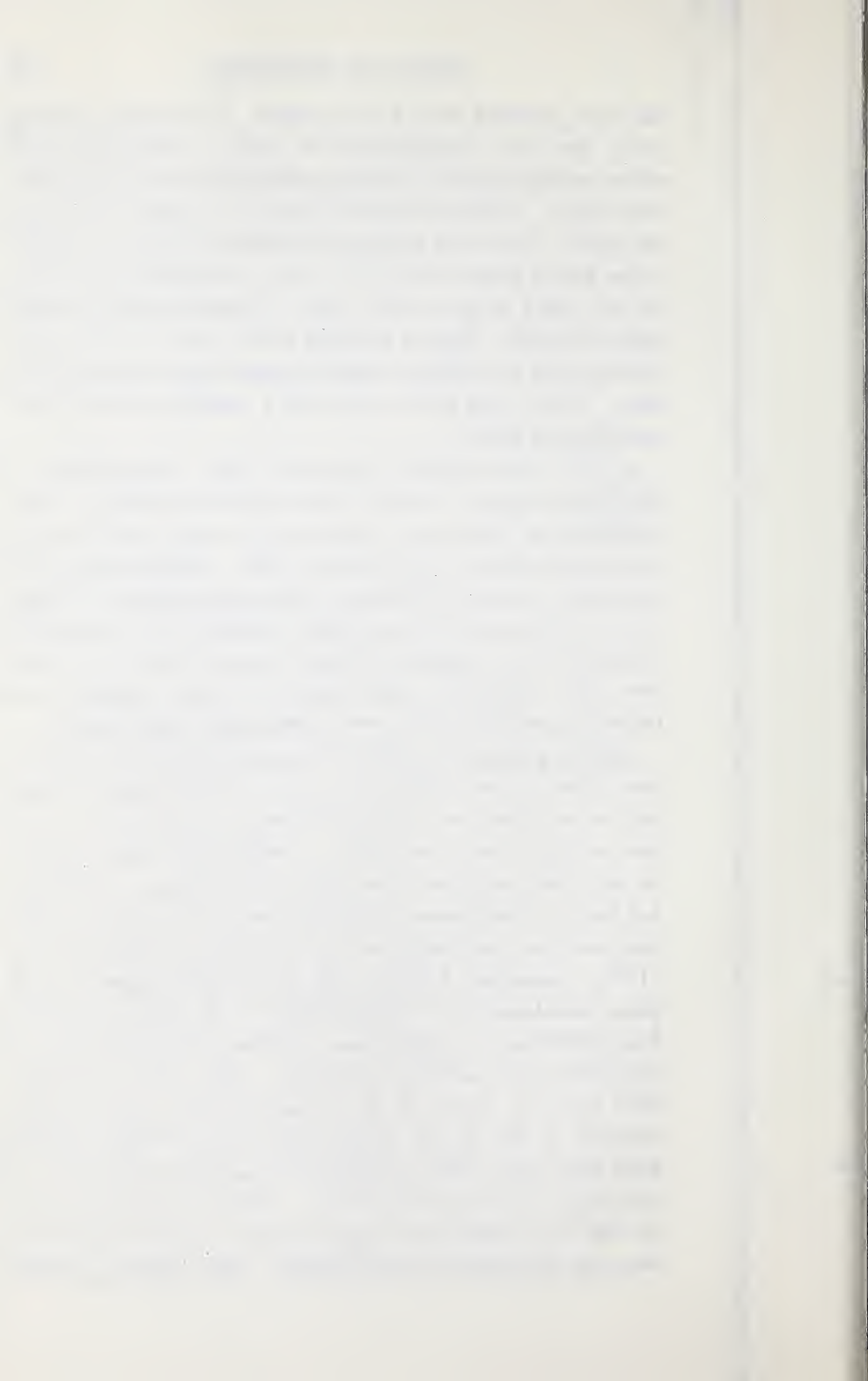


the town procured their burial ground. In less than seventy years, that acre, purchased and set apart for that purpose, was almost entirely occupied with the graves of those men and of their descendants. General Jonas Clark saw the necessity of enlarging the ground, and on the 15th day of October, 1853, he conveyed to the town a piece of land of an acre, or thereabouts, adjoining the old burial ground on the west. It was about three months before his death. He was so feeble that he could not then write his name, but was obliged to make his mark when he executed the deed. It was a gift to the town, with a condition that the town should keep it fenced.

In 1791, when the first census was taken, the population of Middletown was six hundred and ninety-nine—nearly as many inhabitants as there are in the town now—there were but seven hundred and eleven by the census of 1860. Rapid progress had been made, not only in clearing up lands and putting up buildings, but two churches had become firmly established and prosperous; schools had been organized, I think, in every district; roads had been made and by the united effort of a hardy, intelligent and industrious population, they were moving along harmoniously.

Another grist and saw mill had been erected by Nathan Record, near where the road which runs to the "Barber place," crosses the race way that now carries the water to Gray's mills, on land now owned by Mrs. Anna Clark. A blacksmith's shop, and one or two other shops had been built in the village. Mr. Filmore had begun to keep tavern, and John Burnam, who had moved into this town some time during the season of 1785, at about this time (1791) commenced building mills and dwelling houses at the place, since known as "Burnam hollow." Mr. Burnam removed from Shaftsbury to Middletown, and first purchased largely of real estate in the south part of the town. His purchases included what has been known as the "Burnam farm," now owned and occupied by Mr. S. W. Southworth; also the Whiting Merrill farm, lying west of Mr. Southworth's, and also a large tract of land lying south of the Merrill farm. He first put up a log house in what is now called the "upper orchard" on Mr. Southworth's farm, the road then ran in that vicinity. The next year, (1786,)





he put up a frame house, the same now occupied by Mr. Southworth; it has since been repaired. In the year 1791, (if we are not mistaken as to the time,) Mr. Burnam again made large purchases of real estate in the west part of the town. He commenced at once in putting up a dwelling house, afterwards known as the "Sam. Willard house." After that house was completed, he left his son Jacob on his premises, in the south part of the town, and moved into the Willard house. He then went extensively into building mills, also in farming, and built several dwelling houses. He built a forge, foundry, grist and saw mills, an oil mill, carding machine and clothier's works, and a distillery. All of these he put into successful and active operation and carried on here an extensive business until 1811, when his mills were all swept away by the freshet of that year. He afterwards rebuilt his forge and saw mill, but he did not do a large amount of business after this disaster in 1811.

John Burnam was a man of uncommon ability, and of great business capacity. For the success of the religious interests in town, perhaps not much was due to him, although he paid something for such purposes and was in the habit of attending meetings on the Sabbath. He did not believe in the immortality of the soul, but it must be conceded that for the success of business enterprises at that early day, the town were much indebted to him.

Mr. Burnam was a lawyer, and the first one who settled in this town. We have quoted the larger portion of a biographical sketch of him, from Williams' statistics of the Rutland County Bar:

"John Burnam was born in Old Ipswich, Mass., in 1742, and  
"came to Bennington the first year of its settlement, 1761, this  
"being our oldest town. He was one of the first settlers of the  
"State. He was at the time but nineteen years old, previous to  
"which time his education had been wholly neglected, having  
"never, on account of indigence of his parents, received '*but a*  
" '*few weeks schooling.*' For his subsequent attainments, he was  
"wholly indebted to his exertions put forth after this time. In  
"1765, he removed to Shaftsbury, and located himself near



“ Squire Monroe, ‘ *a Yorker*,’ who had received the appointment of Justice of the Peace from New York, and who, by his exertions in behalf of that government, was a source of trouble, and became very obnoxious to the New Hampshire grantees. Some dispute arising between this Squire Monroe and Mr. B., the former prevailed in consequence of his presumed legal knowledge, when Mr. B. determined to inform himself on the subject of law, so at least to know and understand his rights. There were at this time no attorneys in the territory, comprising the State of Vermont, or nearer to it than the new city, (now Lansingburgh, N. Y.) Thither Mr. B. went and procured Blackstone’s Commentaries, and one or two volumes of the N. Y. Colony Laws. These he so attentively studied during his leisure time, that he soon became familiarly acquainted with them, and began to put his knowledge in practice, and soon became ‘ quite ‘ a pettifogger for his times and a new country.’ He removed to Bennington in 1771, and engaged in the mercantile business and continued in it until 1779, when he returned to Shaftsbury where he resided until 1785. During this time he was a member of the conventions of 1776 and ’77, which declared our independence of New York, formed our State constitution, &c. He was one of the committee who draughted the declaration of our independence, and existence as a separate State. He also represented Bennington, then our largest town, in the first General Assembly, or Legislature of the State. During the Revolutionary War, he was commissary of the northern army, and a commissioner for the sale of confiscated estates.

“ His connection with the execution of Redding was perhaps the most notorious event of his life. Redding had been convicted of ‘ criminal conduct ’ by a jury of *six* persons, and was sentenced to be executed on the 14th of June, 1778. Upon the appointed day, and after a vast multitude had assembled to witness the execution, Mr. B. disclosed to the council that, by the common law of England, no man could be sentenced but upon conviction by twelve of his peers, whereupon a reprieve was granted. This was the cause of great disappointment to the people who had assembled to witness the execution, to appease





“whom, Ethan Allen mounted a stump, and exclaimed ‘Attention  
“‘the whole,’ and informed them that ‘on a certain future day  
“‘some one should be hung, and if Redding was not, he would be  
“‘himself.’ Redding was again tried, convicted and executed.”

Mr. Burnam seems to have been engaged as counsel in many of the first cases tried in the County Court, in Bennington County, and “being successful,” was induced by Stephen R. Bradley and Nathaniel Chipman to take the attorney’s oath. Dr. Graham, in his “Letters upon Vermont,” published in 1797, thus speaks of him: “Mr. Burnam, of Middletown, possesses large iron foundries and forges. This gentleman was one of the practising lawyers of the State, but of late years has wholly declined the profession. He is a man of real abilities and great scientific knowledge.”

We should add here that Mr. B. represented the town of Middletown six years, the first time in 1788. He died in Middletown, August 1st, A. D. 1829, aged 87. His father died in Middletown, in 1811, at the age of 97.

John Burnam left four sons and two daughters, none of whom are now living. Nathan, the oldest son, removed from here at an early day. He left a family, as we are informed, who had a good standing and influence. Jacob, the second son, remained on the old homestead until a short time before he died. Jacob has three children now living: Jacob, Jr., and Eveline, the widow of Johnson Cook, both of whom now reside in Sturges, Michigan, and Harry, who is an attorney and judge of probate, and resides in Indiana. Of the other two sons of John Burnam, were John the third, as he was called, who died about 1835, and Sylvester, who died about 1860—both died poor; of the two daughters, one married Jeremiah Leffingwell, the other Samuel Willard. They had the reputation of being worthy women, and were active members of the Methodist denomination. Mr. Leffingwell was a man of considerable notoriety in his time, and was engaged in a good deal of business. One of his daughters married the late Nathan Allen of Pawlet, who has left a family strongly marked with the energy and business tact of their maternal ancestors.

There were other men who came here at about the time and soon after Mr. Burnam, who were strongly identified with the



growth and prosperity of the town, at that early day, of whom, for my own convenience, I shall speak in the latter part of my discourse.

At the census of 1800, we find the population of the town to be 1066, a gain of 367 in nine years; and again we can see that rapid progress had been made in the settlement. A village had sprung up with about as many inhabitants, and probably more business than it now has. John Burnam had a village of his own in "Burnam Hollow," and the Miners were doing quite a business in the east part of the town; every part of the town was settled and the farms were cleared up and under cultivation.

About the year 1800, occurred what we have before alluded to, as the "Wood scrape," a term not expressive perhaps of what is meant by it, but a name which has always been given by the people to a strange affair in which the Wood families, then living here, were the leading actors. It was a religious delusion, and at the time was the cause of great excitement here, and of a good deal of notoriety in this part of the State. That there were other denouements besides delusion in the affair is true, but it had its origin, I have no doubt, in a false religion of which Nathaniel Wood was the author, and was sustained and enabled to become what it did by delusion.

Before 1860, I had conversed with more than thirty old men and women who were living here in 1800, and then supposed I had obtained all the information that could be had on that subject, the substance of which was that the Woods dug for money in various parts of the town, and were engaged in this for nearly a year; that they used hazel rods which they pretended would lead them to places where money had been buried, and that they finally predicted that there would be an earthquake on a future day by them named, and that when that day arrived there was great excitement and commotion among the people, such as was never known here before or since.

About the year 1862, some facts new to me came into my possession, since which time I have made use of all the means in my power to collect all the information connected with that matter which could possibly be obtained. On this thorough investigation,





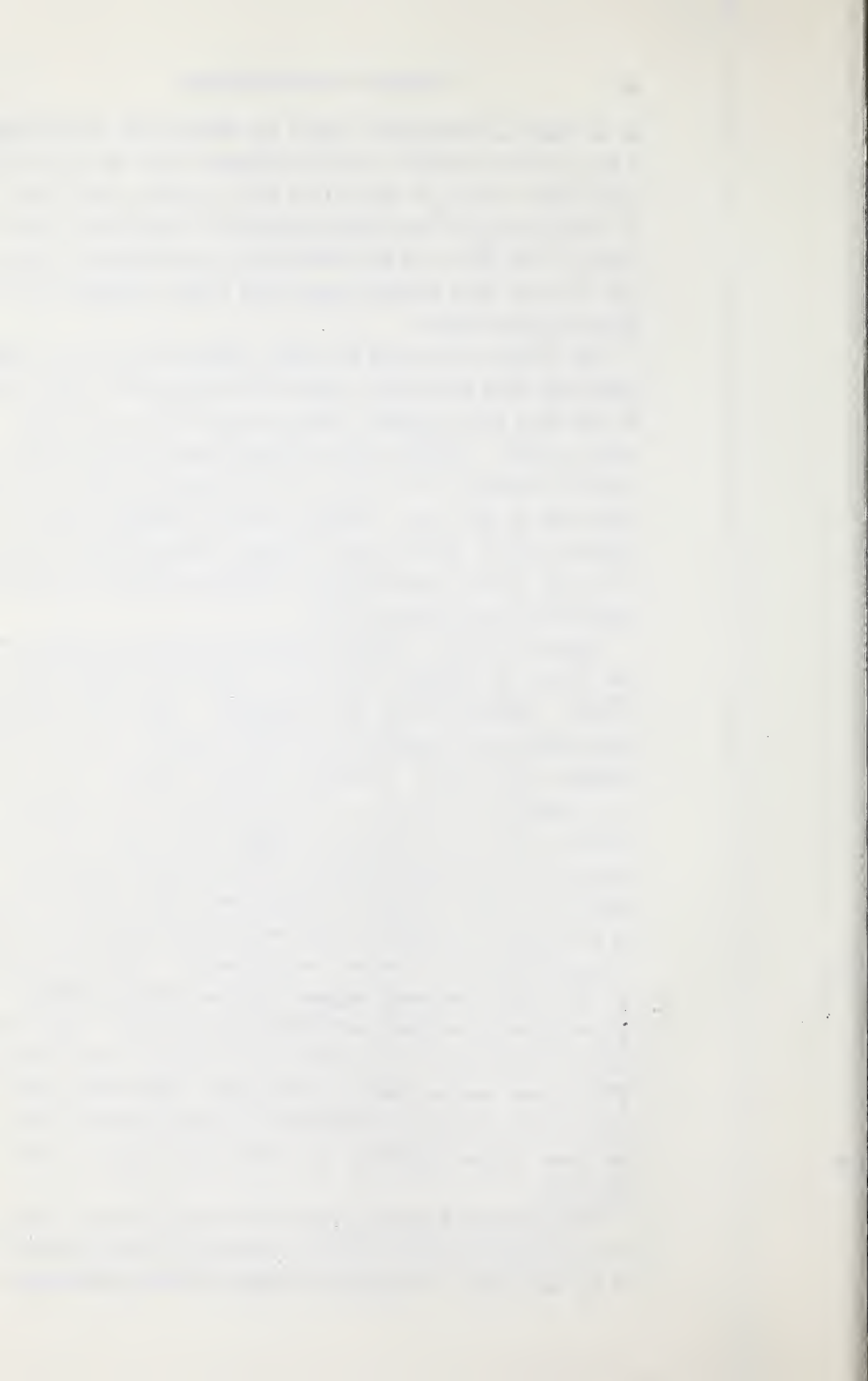
or at least an investigation which has taken much of my time, I have become convinced that the narrations given me by the old people were correct, so far as they went, and they went so far as to include nearly all the open transactions of the Woods ; but the origin of that affair and the results are, in my judgment, important and the facts bearing upon these I have obtained, for the most part, since 1862.

The Woods were among the early settlers of the town. They came here from Bennington, had not been there long ; they came to this State from Norwick, Conn. ; some of them were here as early as 1782. In 1800, they had become more numerous than any family or families of the same or of one name in the town. There were here at this time : Nathaniel Wood, Nathaniel Wood, Jr., Ephraim Wood, Jacob Wood, Ebenezer Wood, Ebenezer Wood, Jr., John Wood, John Wood, Jr., Philemon Wood, Lewis Wood, David Wood and Moseley Wood.

Nathaniel Wood, "the old man of all," as he was called, was the father of Nathaniel Wood, Jr., and of Jacob and Ephraim Wood. Nathaniel Wood was a preacher. After the Congregational Church was organized, he offered himself to them as their minister, but Deacon Jonathan Brewster, having known him in Connecticut, opposed it. Wood persisted for a considerable length of time in his efforts to become their pastor, but Deacon Brewster determinedly opposed it and succeeded in carrying the church with him ; but either to gratify some of Mr. Wood's friends in the church, or to appease him, they passed a vote in which they recognized him "as a leader" in the church. He was a member of the church, as would appear from the records, although he never signed the articles, as did others of that time. The records of that church show that for four or five years, commencing in 1784, there was an almost uninterrupted controversy going on between Mr. Wood and the church, or between him and some one or more of its members. In 1789, the church passed the following :

"That Joseph Spaulding, Lewis Wood and Increase Rudd, be  
"a committee to confer with Mr. Nathaniel Wood, and tell him  
"his fault, viz : of saying one thing and doing contrary, and





“ persisting in contention, and saying in convention that he wished for a council; and when the church, by their committee, proposed to have a council to settle the whole matter, he utterly refused.”

He seemed to have treated this action of the church with contempt, and in October, 1789, the church excommunicated him. It does not appear from the records of the church, that there was any controversy between him and them upon doctrines, but the disputes arose mostly from his charges against members, and against the church, in which he claimed that injustice had been done to him in their action on several occasions. He was a very ambitious man, fond of contention, and had an indomitable will that could not endure defeat; a man of great mental power, and, allowing me to judge from information I have obtained, was as dishonest and unscrupulous in matters of religion as any modern politician has been in politics. When he found he could not rule the congregational church, he seemed determined to ruin it. He was a formidable antagonist; but with such men as Jonathan Brewster, Joseph Spaulding and Gideon Miner in that church, he could make but little progress in that direction.

After Mr. Wood was excluded from the church, he set up meetings of his own, and preached to those who came to hear him, and succeeded, after awhile, in getting quite a congregation, consisting of his own family and family connections, and some others. He held his meetings mostly at the dwelling houses of his sons. His religious doctrines, whatever they might have been while in the congregational church, appeared to be far from orthodox after his independent organization, if organization it was. He professed to believe in supernatural agencies, and dwelt very much in his preaching on the judgments of God, which he claimed would visit the people by the special acts of Providence, as did the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the plagues of Egypt. The judgments of God were his favorite themes. At first his own family did not appear to adopt his new doctrines; but such was his tenacity and perseverance, that by the year 1800 he had drawn them all in, with many others outside of his family and family connections, so that he had at this time a number nearly equal to



either of the other denominations in town. His peculiar religious doctrines will appear as we proceed. Suffice it to say, for the present, that he regarded himself and his followers as modern Israelites or Jews, under the special care of Providence; that the Almighty would not only specially interpose in their behalf, but would visit their enemies, the Gentiles (all outsiders), with his wrath and vengeance.

In this condition we find Nathaniel Wood and his followers when the hazel rod was introduced, and the money digging commenced; but the Woods did not commence it, that honor belongs to a man of another name; but they were in a condition to adopt this man's rod notions, which they did with great effect in their work of deluding the people.

A man by the name of Winchell, as he called himself when he came here, was the first man who used the hazel rod. From what we have learned of him, he was, undoubtedly, an expert villain. He sought to accomplish his purposes by working upon the hopes and fears of individuals, and by a kind of sorcery, which he performed with great skill. The time he came here I cannot give, but it was, undoubtedly, sometime in the year 1799. He was a fugitive from justice from Orange county, Vermont, where he had been engaged in counterfeiting. He first went to a Mr. Cowdry's, in Wells, who then lived in that town, near the line between Wells and Middletown, in the house now owned and occupied by Robert Parks, Esq. Cowdry was the father of Oliver Cowdry, the noted Mormon, who claimed to have been one of the witnesses to Joe Smith's revelations, and to have written the book Mormon, as it was deciphered by Smith from the golden plates. Winchell, I have been told, was a friend and acquaintance of Cowdry's, but of this I cannot be positive, they were intimate afterwards; but Winchell staid at Cowdry's some little time, keeping himself concealed, and it is the opinion of some with whom I have conversed that he commenced his operations of digging for money in Wells, but I have been unable to determine as to that. It is well known that there was a good deal of money digging in that part of Wells. Whether it commenced at the time spoken of, when Winchell went there, or afterwards, is, to my mind, unsettled.

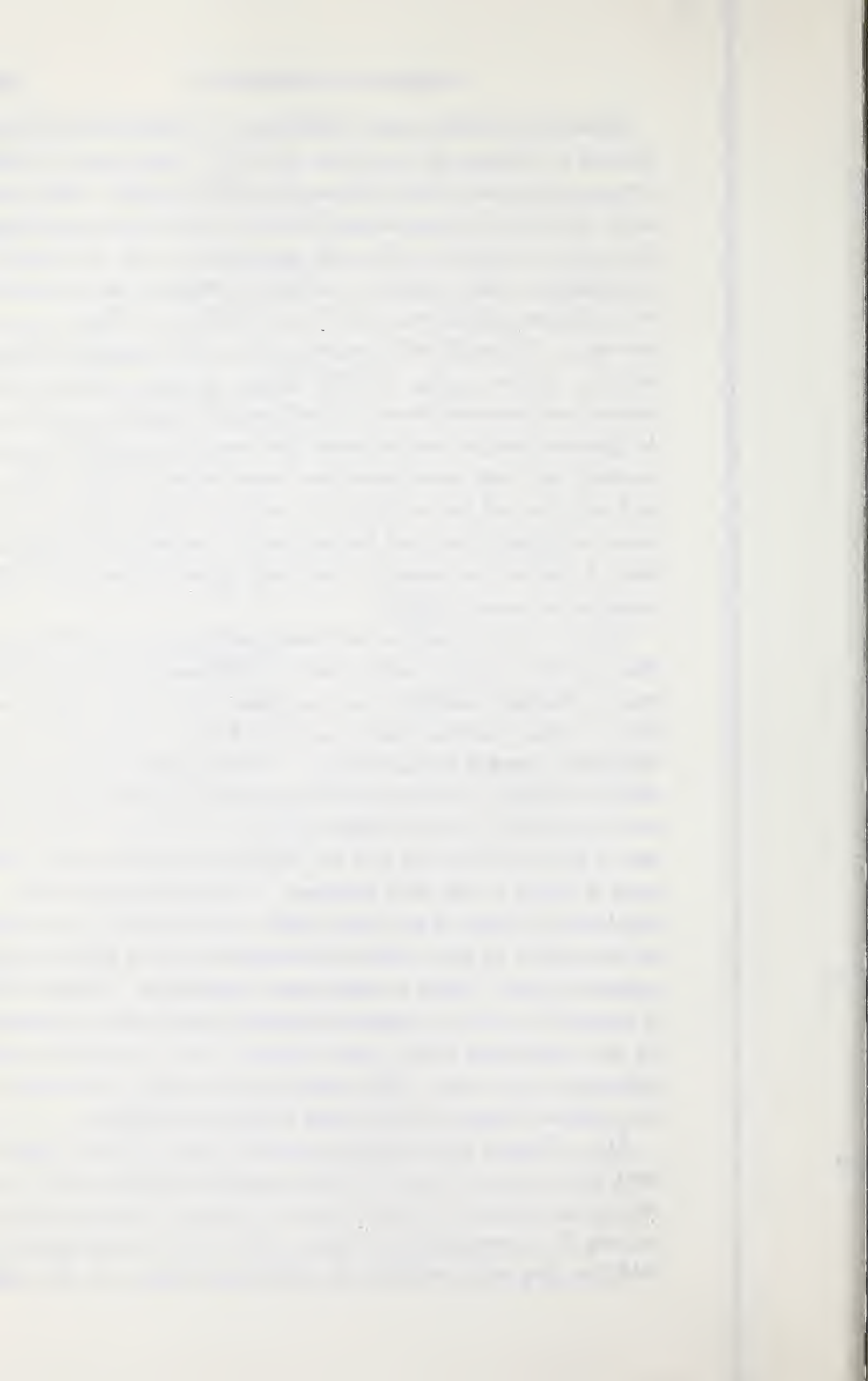




Winchell next turns up in Middletown, at Ezekiel Perry's, in the fall or forepart of the winter of 1799. Perry lived at the extreme south part of the town, on the road to Pawlet. Here he staid all winter, keeping himself from the public eye, practicing his arts of deception as he had opportunity to do so, without attracting too much attention; and here he began to use the hazel rod (whether he had before used it at Cowdry's, in Wells, I cannot say). He would tell fortunes, and do other wondrous things with it. In the spring of 1800, feeling, perhaps, a little more secure from those who desired to find him and bring him to justice, he gathered quite a number about him from the immediate neighborhood, and told them there was money buried in that region, and with his rod he could find it; and told them if they would assist in digging it out, and forever keep it a secret, he would give them a part of the money. This they agreed to, and were all eager to commence digging.

Before we go any further, we should, perhaps, say a word about this rod, which played such a part in Middletown in this eventful year. The best description we can give of it is this: It was a stick of what has been known as witch hazel—a small bush or shrub very common in this vicinity. It was cut with two prongs, in the form of a fork, and the person using it would take the two prongs, one in each hand, and the other end from the body. From the use of this stick Winchell and the Woods pretended to divine all sorts of things to suit their purposes. It is probably true that a hazel stick, or perhaps any green stick, cut in this form, and held in this manner by some persons, will sometimes move without any apparent cause. There is some natural cause for it. Whether it is attracted by water or mineral substances in the earth; or moved by the imagination of the person holding it, is a matter for the philosopher, not for me. This much is quite certain, it was then a very effectual implement with which to practice deception.

After Winchell had made his proposals to those whom he gathered about him, and they had been accepted, he had recourse to his rod to determine whether they were sincere in their promises to keep the money digging a secret. The rod, as he pretended, told him they were, and then he sallied out; went on to the hill



east of Perry's house, holding his rod before him in the manner indicated, his dupes following after. On the hill, a little south of east of the upper Wait house, on the Timmouth side of the line, his rod fell or made some motion, which told him, as he said, that they had reached the spot where the precious metal was buried. The men, with Winchell, immediately prepared themselves with shovels and other implements, and under the direction of Winchell commenced digging. They worked hard for two or three days, and becoming weary, their enthusiasm began to cool, and they began to show signs of giving out. Winchell held up his rod, got some motion from it, and told them the money was in an iron chest and covered with a large stone, and that they would soon come to it. This had the effect to renew their energies, and soon they did come to a stone or a rock, and were at once wild with excitement. Winchell then again consulted his rod, and told his men they must wait awhile before removing the stone or taking out the chest of money. It was now two or three o'clock in the afternoon, and this evil man, the better to accomplish his purposes, kept his dupes away from the place until nearly sundown, when they were then provided with levers, handspikes and bars to remove the stone. Winchell once more astonished them with the motions of his rod, and told them if they obeyed his instructions, they would, in a few moments, be in possession of large sums of money. He impressed it upon them, that the occasion was one of "awful moment," that there was a "divinity" guarding the treasure, and that if there was any lack of faith in any one of the party, or any should utter a word while removing the stone and taking out the chest, that this divinity would put the money forever beyond their reach, and besides he could not be answerable for consequences. Believing every word this vile man said to them, you can imagine better than I can describe, the appearance and feelings of those men as they were prying and lifting away for two long hours at a stone so large that it was impossible for them to remove from its bed. The spell was broken at last. Some one of the party stepped on the foot of another, the latter crying out in pain, "Get off from my toes." Winchell then exclaimed with a loud voice, "The money is gone, flee for



your lives!" Every man of the party dropped his bar or lever, and ran as though it was for life. Thus ended the digging for money at this place. Winchell managed to get what little change these men had while they were digging, probably under the expectation, on their part, that they all would soon have money enough.

Soon after this affair Winchell made the acquaintance of the Woods, who, according to our theory, were then ripe for just such a scheme. As an old man told me, who lived here at the time, and professed to know all about it, "They (the Woods) swallowed Winchell, rod and all." I may as well give that old man's name, it was Jabez D. Perry, who died in Middletown in the fall of 1863. Perry gave me this account of Winchell, which I have written out and now read to you, in 1862; also, more of him which I shall read as I come to it. It being then new to me, I must say that I doubted its truth; but in my researches since that time, I have found evidence, the most of it from living witnesses, to sustain Mr. Perry in every particular, except Winchell's management in the digging as above given—and I might well say that he is sustained in that, for it was all the same, or of similar character in the money digging which followed, and was kept up until the next winter; the same romance attended it, the same imposition was practiced, and there was the same claim to a supernatural agency. The older portion of my audience will agree with me in this, as we heard it from our fathers and mothers, until it became familiar with us.

As I have said, Winchell made the acquaintance of the Woods; and they then commenced using the hazel rod and digging for money, which was in the spring or early in the summer of 1800, and continued in this until late in the fall, and some have said until into the winter. Winchell was with them, but it was not generally known, he being concealed—the Woods were the ostensible managers. They did not handle the pick and shovel very much in the digging; that part of the work was mostly done by those who were drawn into it by the Woods. A man by the name of Pratt did a good deal of the digging; he then lived on what has since been known as the Barber farm, and either at that time or before, owned it. But the Woods superintended the work, and





were the men who handled the rod for the most part in those operations. Jacob Wood, known as Capt. Wood, one of the sons of Nathaniel, was the leader in the use of the rod. "Priest Wood," his father, seemed to throw his whole soul into the rod delusion, but *his* use of the rod was mostly as a medium of revelation. It was "St. John's rod" he said, and undoubtedly was very convenient for him, as he was much more fruitful in his prophecies than before—but Capt. Jacob was the man to find where the money was buried, and to use the rod at their public meetings, and on other occasions, though all the Woods and their followers, had each a rod, which was used whenever they desired any information. If any one was sick, they sought the rod to know whether they would live or die, and to know what medicine to administer to them. In all their business matters, they followed, as they said, the direction of the rod, and with it they could, as they pretended, divine the thoughts and intentions of men.

The greatest part of their digging for money was on the Barber farm, and on the Zenas Frisbie farm, then owned by Ephraim Wood, though they dug in many other places in town. On the Frisbie farm, the farm on which I was born and raised, there are seven or eight places which still bear the marks of their digging. At one place in the "notch," it has been said they dug to the depth of seventy feet, and from the appearances about the place, I should judge they might have gone to that depth. They were led to these places, or pretended to be, by the rods. Many of the old people have told me, that almost every day during that season, Capt. Wood, or some other one, could be seen with the two prongs of the rod twisted around his hands, in search for buried treasures. Whether they were digging for and expected to find coin or ore, has often been asked of me. They talked the most about money, which they said had been buried in this region, which would mean coin of course, but my opinion is, that they had become so deluded that they had no distinct idea as to whether they were in pursuit of gold and silver in coin or in its natural state, but let this be understood as an opinion. Many not familiar with the facts, have supposed, and have said to me, that they were under the impression that the Woods acted upon the theory that those hazel rods



may be attracted by metallic substances in the earth, and hence their motion or working; but they had no such theory as that; there was no show of reason in the affair from beginning to end, their idea was, that *it was revelation*, that it was made known to them through the medium of St. John's rod, and would be revealed to none others but God's chosen people. Nathaniel Wood's Jewish theory, (if I may so call it,) ran through the whole thing from first to last.

Many ludicrous stories which might be amusing to some, could be given, as related by the Woods and others, while they were digging. They dug some time in a cellar on the Barber farm; there they came to a stone, and under it was the chest of money as they said. They run their bars down, and they would strike the chest; then they would dig awhile—run down their bars again, and it would not be there. This would be repeated—sometimes the chest would be there, and then it would not. Once they raised it up and were on the point of taking it out, when their efforts became powerless, the chest would come no further. They then laid a Bible upon it, and went after some one to come and pray over it, but when they returned, the Bible and chest of money were both gone. This result they said was owing to the wickedness or want of faith of some one or more of the party. But this is enough of that kind in connection with Winchell's performances at the first digging for my purpose or yours. There is a good deal more of the same, but it is needless to spend any more time with it.

The rods-men, (such they were called,) became so infatuated as to give up nearly their whole time to this scheme. All the believers became wild fanatics. Besides those in Middletown in this movement, there were several families in the south-east part of Poultney, now known as the Giddings neighborhood; also several families in the north-east part of Wells, in the vicinity of the Giddings neighborhood. These were also digging for money, and were known as belonging to the rod-men.

Some facts may be given to show the delusion of those persons in this movement. Two young ladies in Middletown, whose families belonged to the rods-men, ladies who had hitherto sustained a

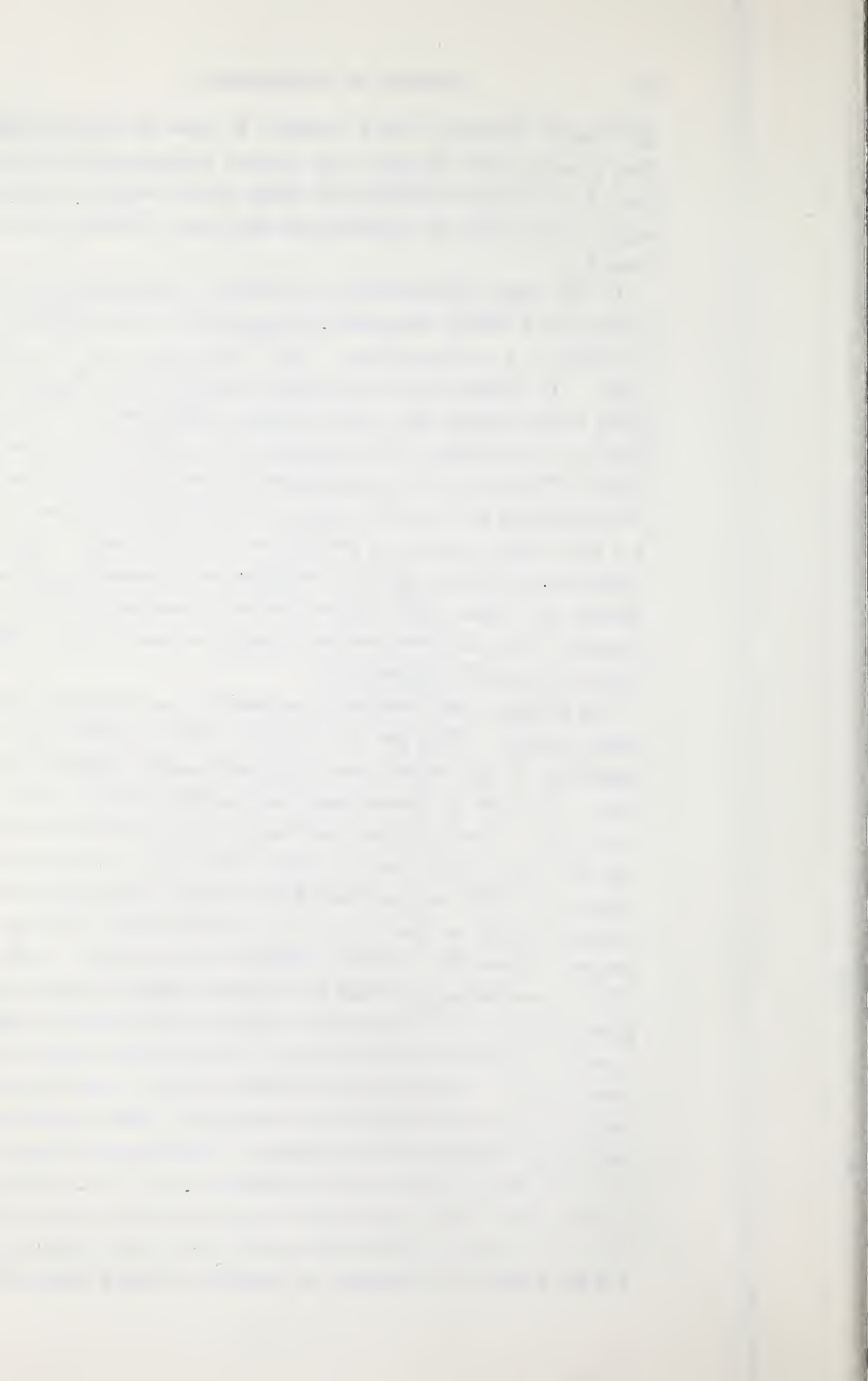




good moral character, had it revealed to them by the rods (as they thought,) that the devil was in their clothing, and by direction of the rod, their clothing was taken off, and they, in a winter night, went across the mountain into that part of Poultney above named.

In this same neighborhood in Poultney, a young lady by the name of Ann Bishop, mysteriously disappeared ; no one could give any clue to her whereabouts. The Woods were sent for, and came. It became known, and large numbers had collected, it being on the sabbath day, from Poultney, Middletown and Wells. The rod was brought into requisition, and pointed to a certain place in Wells pond, which runs up into the south part of Poultney. The conclusion was that the lady was drowned in that place, and the next thing done was a preparation to get the body. Ropes, chains and hooks were procured, and logs were drawn up, a horse-blanket and some other matter, but no human body. She was drowned there, the rods-men said, they were sure of that. She afterwards made her appearance.

The Woods at one time had it revealed to them, that they must build a temple. They got out the timber for the frame, got it raised up to the rafters, when they had another revelation that that work must be discontinued, and nothing more was done on the temple. From the time the Woods began to use the rod and dig for money, which we have seen was in the spring or early summer of 1800, they and their followers were every day becoming more heated in their zeal, and by the December following, it became evident that a crisis would soon be reached. " Priest Wood " was becoming so loud and vehement and so frenzied in his favorite theme of God's judgments upon the wicked Gentiles, that it was not difficult to perceive that a paroxysm and collapse were near at hand. It was revealed to them, as they said, that on a certain night there would be an *earthquake*—that immediately prior to the earthquake the "destroyer" would pass through the land and slay a portion of the unbelievers, and the earthquake would complete the destruction of them and their worldly possessions. The day on which they predicted that this would occur, was the 14th day of January, A. D. 1801. This I have deter-



mined from a letter which I have received from an old gentleman who was present on the occasion, and which will be read to you.

When the day arrived for the earthquake, the Woods and their friends all collected at the house of Nathaniel Wood, Jr., who then lived on what has been known as the Micah Vail farm, which is now owned and occupied by Crockee Clift, and as they left their own houses, prepared them for the earthquake by putting their crockery on the floors, and wrote on each of their door-posts: "Jesus our passover was sacrificed for us." The rods-men, or those who handled the rods, among whom Capt. Wood was chief, were at Nathaniel Jr.'s house early in the day. One of their duties on this occasion was to determine who were and who were not to be saved from the approaching destruction or "plague," as they called it, and to admit such into the house, and those only, who were to be spared. The occasion was with them the Passover, and how they kept it will pretty fully appear from the letter above alluded to.

Up to the evening of this day, the people of the town had looked unconcerned upon this folly of the Woods, but now they became suddenly aroused, and many were very much alarmed. They feared some evil might befall some of the inhabitants during the night. They (the Gentiles,) had no belief in the Wood's predictions, but feared that they or some of their followers would themselves turn "destroying angels" and kill some of the inhabitants, or get up an artificial earthquake by the use of powder, which would result in injury to persons or property. Capt. Joel Miner was commander-in-chief of the militia in town, and hastily collected his company. Capt. Miner was a very energetic, as well as a very earnest man, and I should judge from all accounts, was at this time very much alarmed for the safety of the inhabitants. General Jonas Clark was at the time one of his subordinate officers, and was teaching a singing school which had assembled at the house of Mr. Filmore. Capt. Miner came in much excited, reprimanded him for his indifference in the matter, and ordered him to duty. He left his singing school at once, and took his place in the militia. The General was not in the habit of neglecting his duty, but he was a philosopher, and it is probable that he "didn't think there



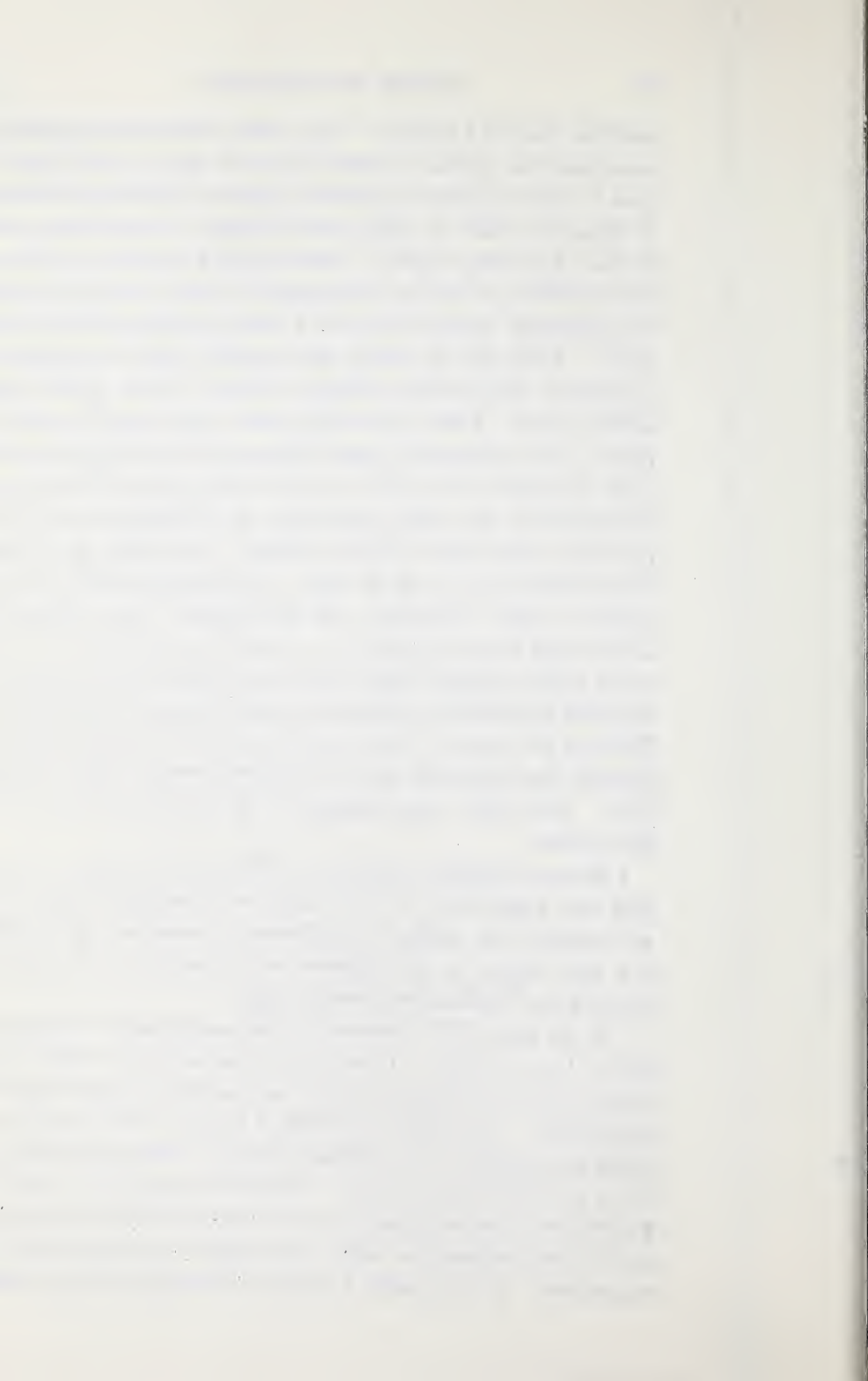


would be much of a shower." Capt. Miner stationed his company as sentinels and patrols in different parts of the town, with directions to allow no person to pass them unless a satisfactory account of themselves could be given, and especially to have an eye out for the "destroying angels." The town had a quantity of powder, balls and flints, as the law then required; these were kept in the Congregational meeting house in a sort of cupboard under the pulpit. From this the militia were supplied with the requisite ammunition, and Jonathan Morgan was left here to guard the military stores. There was no sleep that night among the inhabitants; fear, consternation, great excitement and martial law prevailed throughout the night—but the morning came without any earthquake, or any injury done to any of the inhabitants or their property, except Jacob Wood's crockery was broken up in his house, where he left it on the floor. A journeyman hatter in the employ of Dyar Leffingwell said he thought "the earthquake hadn't ought to go for nothing," and went into the house, (it was where Lucius Copeland, Esq., now lives,) in Capt. Wood's absence to attend the Passover, and broke up and destroyed his crockery. That was the extent of the mischief so far as the destruction of property was concerned, and no individual received any bodily harm. The militia were dismissed in the morning and went to their homes.

I shall now introduce the letter to which I have alluded. It is from Rev. Laban Clark, D. D., a man over ninety years old, as I am informed, who resides in Middletown, Connecticut, and is still in a good degree in the enjoyment of his faculties. Mr. Clark was with the Woods on the eventful night.

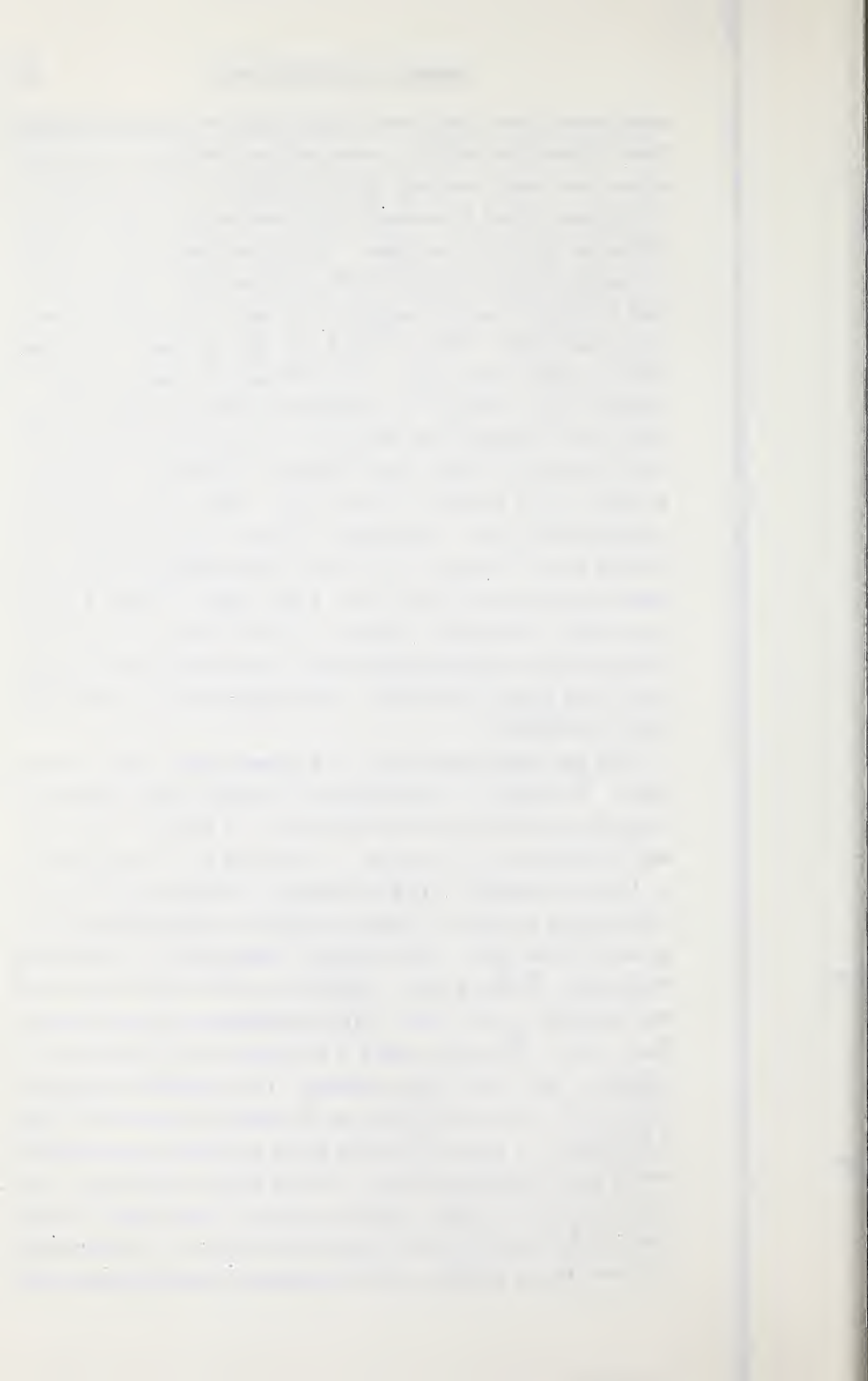
"In the year 1801, I traveled in the north part of Vermont, and in Lower Canada. I met at that time a man who told wonderful stories of finding St. John's rod, and the strange things it accomplished. November 1st, 1801, I went to Brandon circuit, which then included all of Rutland County. I heard on arriving there, much talk of the *rod-men*. People were saying that certain persons were directed by rods to certain plants and roots that they used to cure diseases, in many cases which they thought almost miraculous. In December I went to Poultney for my first





appointment there ; and was informed that two young women had been following the rods in a severe cold and dark night over places where men could scarcely go by day-light. I went thence to Middletown, where I preached in the house of Mr. Done, the only Methodist family in the place. After the close of the services the people began to inquire of Mr. D. about the "girls tramp;" and I learned that his daughter was one of the young women above mentioned. When I could see Mr. D. alone, I conversed with him upon the subject. He told me that many people in America were, unknown to themselves, Jews, and these divining rods would designate who they were. I asked him to let me see one of the rods. After some hesitation, he did so. I asked him to learn by it whether I were a Jew. The rod immediately pointed towards me. I said then, "If that is true, please tell me to what tribe I belong?" He tried several different tribes, but there was no motion of the rod. I then said, "I think I belong to the tribe of Joseph." At once the rod pointed towards me; thus proving to my satisfaction that it was moved by the imagination of the person who held it. I felt anxious for the result of all this, but said little.

"At my next appointment in Poultney, Bro. Done met me there. He looked so very dejected I feared he had come for me to attend some funeral service for a friend. I asked for his family, and for the cause of his sorrow. "O," said he, "the judgments of God are abroad." He then said they had determined to spend the next day as a day of fasting and prayer, and he desired me to go and be with them. Accordingly, accompanied by Mr. Yates and Esquire Wells, I went. When we arrived old Priest Wood was lecturing, on the words, "Thy judgments are made manifest," Rev. 15:4. When he closed I announced my appointment to preach at Mr. Done's that evening. I was asked to change the place to the one we were now in, as seats were there all ready. I consented. I went to Mr. D.'s to tea and found a great deal of secret manœuvring going on. To give them all free lorn I went to the barn for a time. On my return, I found posted on the door, "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." I said nothing, but went to my meeting. After preaching, several persons coun-



menced holding up rods, and running from one end of the room to the other. I prepared to leave, when Bro. D. came to me much agitated, and expressed sorrow that I could not stay at his house that night. "Where will I go?" I said. He replied, "O, you will fare as well as the rest of us." So I sat down. We were soon ordered to go to the house fixed up for the occasion—a school room where they had made a large fire. They all came in much agitated, many weeping. I found they were expecting there was to be an earthquake. I conversed with several respecting those that had the rods. They professed to have been converted, but all the evidence I could gain of the fact was that the rods would work in their hands. We sat there till morning light. As morning dawned they went out and looking upward, kept working the rods. At last the old minister said: "O, I told them I thought it would not be until to-morrow night." Soon after light I went to Bro. Done's and asked to take a nap. On passing through the parlor I found all the crockery setting in the middle of the floor. After sleeping, I was taking my breakfast, when two men came in and said they had found out the whole mistake. They had thought because the rods had directed them to have all their goods packed up, that there was to be an earthquake. But this was the 14th day of the first month, (it was the 14th of Jan.,) and on the 14th day of the first month the children of Israel were directed to keep the Passover with shoes and hats on. So they were directed now to keep that day until they were prepared to go into the New Jerusalem. I made no remark, but concluded they had now something to work on to deceive the people.

"After eight weeks I had another appointment to preach in the same place. When I inquired of Bro. Done respecting the rods. He seemed perfectly honest and sincere, but all in earnest and perfectly duped. He told me the rods were able invisibly to remove gold and silver. He said they had found that there was a vast quantity of it in the earth, and the rods could collect it to one place. They were now doing the work and expected to get enough to pave the streets of the New Jerusalem. I asked if the gold came in its native state or in currency. He said in *both*. I then asked him if they had any person who understood refining





gold? He said they had one who understood it perfectly well. "Where is he," I said. "He keeps himself secreted in the woods," he replied. I asked his name, and he told me it was Wingate. I remembered at once; it was the name of a man who was detected about two years before in Bradford, Vt., in milling counterfeit dollars. My father having been selectman of the town at the time, I had known the case well. After some reflection, I said to Bro. Done "I fear there is counterfeiting going on, and if you are not careful I fear you will be drawn into it and your reputation and your family ruined." He was alarmed. I said "I think I can tell you how to escape. If my fears are correct, they will call on you for sums of money, and will want it in specie." He replied they had already done so. I advised him then to put away his rod and quit them, or he was a ruined man. Four weeks after that, when I returned, he told me he had not seen his rod since I left. I asked him to burn it. He replied his wife knew where it was, and left the room. She brought it and I burned it.

"I ascertained afterwards that the eldest son of Priest Wood, called Capt. Wood, was the principal religious mover in sight while Wingate kept concealed. Wood was Wingate's outside agent, and got up the religious excitement to aid the scheme."

The foregoing was penned by a friend for Mr. Clark, as will appear from the following, which accompanied the same in Mr. Clark's own hand.

"MIDDLETOWN, Conn., Jan'y 30, 1867.

"DEAR SIR:—My hand is so paralyzed that it is difficult for me to write. I do not find the manuscript of the notice published, but have related some of the facts by the hand of a friend. I never resided in the town of Middletown in Vermont, but traveling on a circuit preached there once a month for about six months. I had no acquaintance with the Woods other than holding the Pass-over with them the 14th of January, 1801. By what I learned of them, I have no doubt that their movement gave origin to the Mormons, the vilest scheme of villainy and corruption that has ever cursed the country.

Yours, respectfully,

LABAN CLARK."



Mr. Clark says, "I ascertained afterwards that the eldest son of Priest Wood, called Capt. Wood; was the principal religious mover in sight, while Wingate kept concealed. Wood was Wingate's outside agent, and got up the religious excitement to aid the scheme." This Wingate and Winchell the name given me by Perry and others, are beyond question, one and the same person. What we get from Mr. Clark's letter, so far as it goes, of Wingate is the same I obtained from Perry of Winchell in 1862—that is, that he was detected in counterfeiting, in Bradford, Vt., came here and was with the Woods in their movement, and kept himself concealed in the time. Perry told me that he changed his name after he came, to avoid discovery by the officers of justice. Whether he did or not, I cannot be positive, but it is established beyond controversy, that a man came, first to Wells, then to Middletown, introduced the hazel rod, and afterwards acted a part with the Woods which we have indicated; and that Winchell, as given me by Perry, and Wingate the name in Mr. Clark's letter, both mean that man.

Now was this wild and mysterious affair a movement to cover up a counterfeiting scheme? Such has been the opinion of nearly all with whom I have conversed on that subject. The old folks who were here at the time, were very decidedly of that opinion. I never got the name of Winchell (so I shall continue to call him,) from any one until I got it from Perry, but many of them have said to me that the Woods had a man with them who understood counterfeiting, and they had no doubt about his being engaged with them in that business. I never have got hold of any evidence of counterfeiting in that affair, other than the facts I am giving you, except this: a large oven was afterwards discovered in an out of the way place, on the premises of one of the Woods, which bore marks of use for other purposes than baking bread. But it is quite probable, in my opinion, that counterfeiting was going on—that was Winchell's trade; he was an old hand at the business—it was money that *he* was after, that was his end and aim in this affair. Was that the purpose of the Woods? Upon this question I find myself to differ from almost all others, including those who were here at the time, and doubtless more compe-





tent to judge of it than I am. That the Woods were in intimate and close connection with Winchell in his concealment, there is no doubt, and if he was counterfeiting they must have known it; but it has always seemed to me as though they were actuated and borne on in that strange movement by their religious zeal. Nathaniel Wood had been excluded from the congregational church some twelve years before, and had gotten up a new system of religious doctrine, and seemed determined that they should prevail at all events. The use of the rod was not the beginning of it, but by the use of the rod many converts were added, and the zeal of all greatly increased and continued to increase until it amounted to distraction. The conduct of those men does not seem to me like deliberate plotting and planning, but more as though they were carried along by an irresistible current of fanaticism; but this is an opinion, not history.

That Winchell availed himself of this "outside" movement to cover up and aid his nefarious schemes, is very likely. He was cool and deliberate—he "could raise the wind and not be carried along with it," and turn the effects of it to his own advantage.

In the Wood families, and especially in Nathaniel Wood's family, were some of the best minds the town ever had. Jacob Wood, the oldest son of Nathaniel, was elected one of the selectmen of the town at the first meeting after the town was organized, and almost constantly held some town office after that. He was more like his father than his other sons—more inclined to be a religious agitator. Ephraim, the second son, was elected constable at the first annual meeting, and had several successive elections to that office. He and his brother, Nathaniel Jr., at first tacitly assented to their fathers religious notions, but after the rod delusion commenced, they were drawn into it, though they never took a leading part as their brother Jacob did. Nathaniel Wood, Jr., was undoubtedly the superior of all the Woods in point of ability and culture. He represented Middletown in the legislature five or six years in succession; was for a long time the active justice of the peace here; was town clerk several years, and held other offices. He was the father of Reuben Wood, who studied law with Gen. Jonas Clark, went to Cleveland, Ohio, about the





year 1817, got into an extensive practice there—was made a judge of the supreme court of that state, which position he held for seventeen years, and a portion of that time was chief justice. He had the reputation of being one of the best jurists in the United States. He was afterwards made governor of Ohio, which office he held, I think, four years.

Perhaps I ought to say, this of the Woods, excepting Priest Wood, that up to the time this rod imposition commenced, no act of their lives has ever been mentioned in my hearing inconsistent with honesty, industry and good citizenship—but so much the more mysterious and unaccountable, their disgraceful conduct in the “rod scrape.” The Wood families removed from Middletown as soon as they could conveniently after the failure of their earthquake enterprise; they went to Ellisburg, N. Y., and it has been said, that ever after, they and their descendants have demeaned themselves as good citizens.

In connection with this Wood affair, I have one thing more to consider, which is perhaps more important as a matter of history than anything else connected with it.

Mr. Clark in his letter says: “By what I have heard of them, (the Woods,) I have no doubt that the movement gave origin to the Mormons.” This opinion of Mr. Clark, I have no doubt will be received by you as a surprise, as it would be to the people generally, both in and out of Middletown. But Mr. Clark is not the only man who has given the same opinion. I first got it from Jabez D. Perry, in 1862. It was a surprise to me then, and I examined and cross-examined him for hours together, to get all the facts I could bearing upon that point—since which time I have found others, intelligent men, of the same opinion. After receiving the foregoing letter from Mr. Clark, I wrote him again asking him for the facts to sustain his opinion. In reply, he refers me to a work written by Dr. Kidder of Chicago, Illinois, which I have obtained, but says that about 1840 he heard two Mormon preachers in Connecticut, who held to the “same or much the same doctrines which the Woods did in Middletown.” In this he is undoubtedly correct. I have no desire to give Middletown the honor of being the birth-place of Mormonism, but I do desire to bring out facts,



and if from those facts Mormonism may be traced back to this place, as a matter of history, and of curiosity, the people here, and throughout the country should know it.

That the system of religion promulgated by Nathaniel Wood, and adopted by his followers in 1800, was the same, or "much the same," as the Mormons adopted on the start, is beyond question. It was claimed by the Mormons, so says a writer of their history, "that pristine christianity was to be restored, with the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues—with power to heal all manner of diseases—that the fulness of the gospel was to be brought forth by the power of God, and the seed of Isarel were to be brought into the fold, and that the gospel would be carried to the Gentiles, many of whom were to receive it." These were the doctrines of the Woods, as may be inferred from what appears in the foregoing. The Woods were very fruitful in prophecies, especially after the hazel rod came to their use; so were the Mormons in the beginning of their creed, and both the Woods and the Mormons claimed to have revelations, and sought for them and received them, as they pretended not only in matters of religion, but in matters of business. They pretended to be governed by the Divine will as revealed to them on the occasion.

The question now arrises, how came the Mormons by these religious doctrines of the Woods? Was it a mere accident, that the Mormons afterwards got up a system like that concocted by Nathaniel Wood, years before, as the Wood affair collapsed in 1801 or 1802, two or three years before Joe Smith was born, and they (the Woods,) and their followers were at once scattered in various parts of the country, and Mormonism did not appear to the world, until about 1830. It might have been purely accidental, but it seems to me hardly probable.

Now then, if this system of religion inaugurated by the Woods was transmitted to the Mormons, what is the evidence. I will give all the evidence I have been able to procure on that subject, and it is for you to weigh and give to it such effect as it is entitled to.

In the first place, their religious theories being the same, would have have great weight, and would be almost conclusive in the





matter, unless overcome by facts and circumstances, showing the contrary. This same Winchell or Wingate, the counterfeiter, who introduced the rod here, and was with the Woods in their operations, afterwards went to Palmyra, New York, the home of Joe Smith, when he (Smith) set on foot the Mormon scheme. What time Winchell went to Palmyra, I am unable to say, but he was there early enough to get Joe Smith's father to digging for money, some years before Joe was old enough to engage in the business—but Joe was at it as soon as he was old enough, and if his biographers can be relied on, he followed it until about the time he pretended to have found the golden bible. I have been told that Joe Smith's father resided in Poultney at the time of the Wood movement here, and that he was in it, and one of the leading rods-men. Of this I cannot speak positively, for the want of satisfactory evidence, but that he was a rods-man under the tuition of this counterfeiter after he went to Palmyra has been proven, to my satisfaction, at least. I have before said that Oliver Cowdry's father was in the "Wood scrape." He then lived in Wells, afterwards in Middletown, after that went to Palmyra, and there we find these men with the counterfeiter, Winchell, searching for money over the hills and mountains with the hazel rod, and their sons Joe and Oliver, as soon as they were old enough, were in the same business, and continued in it until they brought out the "vilest scheme that ever cursed the country."

It appears from some of the Mormon histories, that the Mormon organization first consisted of the Smith family, Oliver Cowdry and Martin Harris, the name of the counterfeiter, whether it was Winchell or Wingate, does not appear in any account that I have seen, unless he had by this time assumed another name, but he had been at Palmyra for some years and went with them from Palmyra to Ohio. He was not a man who could endure the gaze of the public, but his work was done in secret; that he was at Palmyra, acted the part I have indicated, and went off with the Mormons when they left Palmyra, has been fully proven by men who were here during the Wood affair, and afterwards removed to Palmyra, and knew him in both places.

What I have now said of the Smiths, Cowdry and Winchell, has



been obtained from living witnesses, to which I will add a few quotations from authors.

Gov. Ford of Illinois, in his history of the Mormons, says of Joe Smith, "That his extreme youth was spent in idle, vagabond life, roaming in the woods, dreaming of buried treasures, and exerting the art of finding them by twisting a forked stick in his hands, or by looking through enchanted stones. He and his father before him, were what are called "water witches," always ready to point out the ground where wells might be dug and water found."

In a work written by Rev. Dr. Kidder of Illinois, some twenty years ago, which is the best expose of Mormonism and the Mormons I have ever seen, he has a statement purporting to have been signed by sixty-two credible persons, residents of Palmyra, N. Y. In that statement, those men say of the Smiths, that "they were particularly famous for visionary projects, spent much of their time in digging for money, which they pretended was hidden in the earth; and to this day large excavations may be seen in the earth not far from their then residence, where they used to spend their time in digging for hidden treasures." In Dr. Kidder's work, the first Mormons are frequently characterized as "money diggers," as though that had been their principal avocation, as it doubtless was.

I have perhaps already occupied more time upon this matter than I should, but I have thought it proper and important too, to give what evidence I have been able to obtain, to show that the Wood movement here "gave origin to the Mormons." I am fully convinced that the Rev. Mr. Clark has good grounds for that opinion. It is not claimed that any of the Woods who were here in 1800, or their descendants ever had anything to do with Mormonism after it was known to the world as such, but their religion and their ways of deceiving the people by pretended revelations and otherwise, were brought along down by the Smiths, the Cowdrys, and the counterfeiter. They used the rod, that is, the elder Smith and Cowdry, and pretended by that to obtain revelations, from the time the Wood affair exploded here, and their sons Joe Jr. and Oliver, the most successful imposters of modern times,



commenced their education with the use of the hazel rod or forked stick, in searching for hidden treasures—though afterwards used what they called enchanted stones. I ask no one to accept my opinion or that of any other person in this matter as the truth, but must say, that it is my honest belief that this Wood movement here in Middletown was one source, if not the main source, from which came this monster—Mormonism.

In 1801 there was again put on the records of the town “a roll of the freemen of Middletown.” This I have copied as it may be desirable to know who were then here; it contains the following names:

Ephraim Wood,	Gamaliel Waldo,	Reuben Loomis,
John Sunderlin,	James McClure,	Joseph Chub,
Daniel Haskins,	Phineas Clough,	Joseph Bateman,
Sam'l Sunderlin,	Nathan Walton,	John Burnam, Esq.,
Jacob Wood,	Silas Mallary,	William Downey,
Jonathan Brewster,	Nathan Colgrove,	Jona. Davison,
Benj. Haskins,	James Smith,	Sam'l Tracy,
Jonathan Haynes,	Ashur Blunt,	Jonas Clark,
Increase Rudd,	Luther Filmore, ✓	Nathan Colgrove, Jr.,
Edmund Bigelow, Esq.,	Nathan Ford,	Moses Leach,
Thomas Morgan,	Eph. Carr,	Dyar Matson,
Jonathan Frisbie,	Rufus Clark,	Gideon Miner, Jr.,
Benj. Coy,	Baruk Rudd,	Jos. Spalding, Jr.,
Timothy Smith,	Nathaniel Wood,	Caleb White,
Francis Perkins,	Nathaniel Wood, Jr.,	Russel Barber,
Samuel Stoddard,	Nehemiah Hazen,	Amasa Mehurin,
Benj. Butler,	Enos Clark,	Abel Hubbard,
Nathan Record,	Theophilus Clark,	Ezra Clark,
Jonathan Mehurin,	Solomon Rockwell,	Augustus Frisbie,
Richard Haskins,	Orson Brewster,	Johnson Rudd,
Joseph Rockwell,	Lewis Miner,	Eb. Wood,
Jesse Hubbard,	Edward Corbin,	Eb. Bateman,
Gideon Miner,	Thomas Davison,	Fitch Loomis,
William Frisbie,	Bela Caswell,	John Burnam, 3d,
Azor Perry,	Stephen Richardson,	Mosley Wood,
Thomas French,	Joel Frisbie,	Alexander Murray,



The first part of the book is devoted to the study of the properties of the real numbers. It begins with a discussion of the natural numbers and the integers, and then moves on to the rational numbers. The second part of the book is devoted to the study of the properties of the real numbers. It begins with a discussion of the real numbers and the complex numbers, and then moves on to the study of the properties of the real numbers.

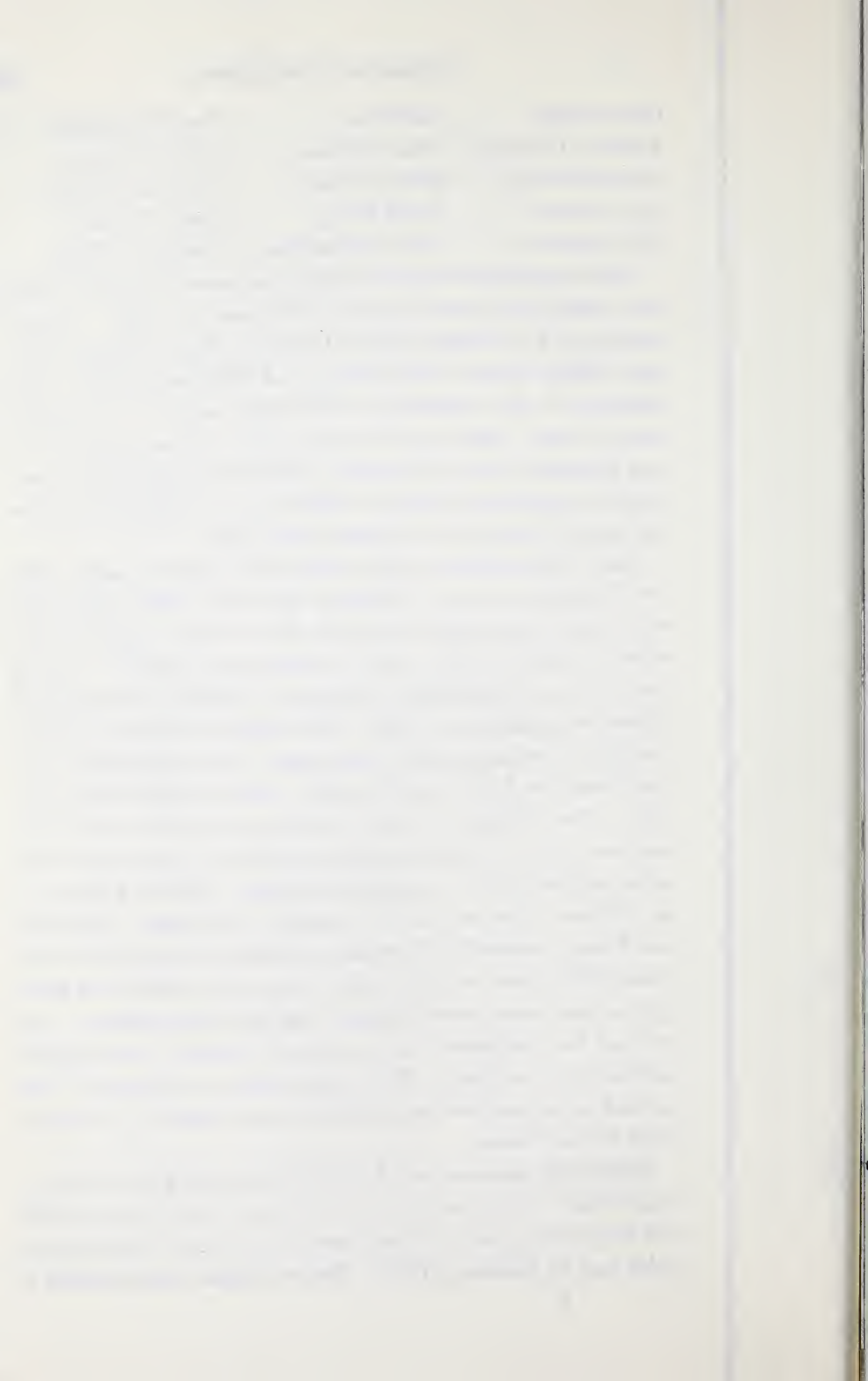
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2. The integers	2.1. The integers	2.1.1. The integers
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Gideon Buel,	Joel Miner,	Jac. Harrington,
Jonathan Griswold,	Jacob Burnam,	Calvin Colgrove,
David Griswold,	Roswell Clark,	Ambrose Record,
Levi Skinner,	David Tracy,	Sam'l Northrop,
Wait Rathbon,	Ansel Shepardson,	Obadiah Williams.

The foregoing list does not contain the names of all the males over twenty-one years of age in the town in 1801. Joseph Spaulding, Asa Gardner, Jonas Clark, Jr., Zenas Frisbie, Philemon Frisbie, Elisha Clark, George and Eli Oatman, and a few others, were then inhabitants of the town, and over twenty-one years of age. There may have been other names omitted, or it may have been a list of those who voted at the election that year; but the list may be valuable for reference, as it doubtless contains the names of nearly all the freemen then here.

Some of the persons, whose names are on that roll, were children of the first settlers, and came here with their fathers, and many others came here soon after the town was organized, and after the first roll, before given, was made and recorded. Among the latter was Joel Frisbie, a brother of William and Jonathan Frisbie, who came here in 1786. He bought out Francis Perkins, the place now known as the Lewis place, (where John Lewis now lives,) and lived there until he died, which was about the year 1811. Joel Frisbie, as I have been informed by those who knew him, was a man of good character, good common sense, and a valuable member of the congregational church. He had a family of six children. Two sons and a daughter died young. His third son, Palmer, removed to Lysander, Onondaga County, New York, about 1820, where he lived until he died, some four or five years ago, at the age of seventy-eight. He left three children—one son and two daughters, and a very good estate. One daughter married Deacon Warren White, and resides in Lysander. The son and other daughter are unmarried, and reside on the homestead of their father.

Barker, the youngest son of Joel Frisbie, studied law with Gen. Jonas Clark; was admitted to the Rutland County bar in 1814, and was in the practice of law here from that time until he died, which was in February, 1821. Barker Frisbie was not called a



brilliant man, but a very good lawyer; was a man of good judgment, good habits, and a very laborious student. He was elected Town Clerk in March, 1815, and held the office until his death—which occurred in February, 1821.

Rufus Butts was, for many years, one of the useful men of the town. He was born in the town of Wells, but at or before he reached his majority he became an inhabitant of Middletown. He was one of the first mechanics here; although confined to no particular trade, he was a rare mechanical genius, made ploughs, ox yokes, rakes, baskets, tubs, or anything else the people needed. He removed to Cambridge, Vt., about 1841, and died but a few weeks since over eighty years of age—his wife also recently died. His son, Harvey, survives him and lives on the homestead in Cambridge.

Bela Caswell removed from Mansfield, Mass., to Middletown, in 1783. He was then nearly fifty years old, and had ten children, four sons and six daughters, all born in Massachusetts. Three of them preceded him in coming here, the remaining seven came with him. He too brought his family and effects with an ox team. He settled near where his grandson, Deacon J. Q. Caswell, now lives, where he lived until his death; he died November 22d, 1826, at the age of 89. His family were perhaps the most remarkable for longevity of any family that ever lived in town. His father and mother, who came with him from Massachusetts, lived to be very old and died in Middletown, and were among the first laid in yonder burial ground. Bela Caswell's wife and ten children survived him; his widow was nearly 96 years old when she died. One of his daughters, Mrs. Record, died not long since, at the great age of 99 years; another, Mrs. Barber, the widow of the late Russel Barber, died in Middlebury, N. Y., last summer (the summer of 1866,) at the age of 93 years and some months. Two other daughters lived to be very old, and two are still living: Mrs. Norton, whose age is now 89, and Mrs. Terrill, who is 81 years old. Two of the sons, Josiah and Ziba, lived to be 70 years old. Jesse was 69 when he died, and John died at 46. Of this numerous family, and of their numerous descendants, none are now living here except three children of John Caswell and their





families, viz: Miss Violetta Caswell, Mrs. Calvin Leonard and Deacon John Q. Caswell.

Jesse Caswell and his family exerted a marked influence in the Congregational Church for many years. He had three sons and two daughters. Menira, his oldest son, was for some years one of the deacons of the church, and was a long time its clerk. Like all of this family, he was attentive, faithful and constant in the discharge of his religious duties. Whatever might be the state of religious feeling in the church, he was sure to attend its meetings and to be ready to perform his part. He did not wait for some unusual interest to draw him out, but was ever at his post—Deacon Menira Caswell now resides in Castleton. Jesse, the second son, graduated at Middlebury College, became a minister of the gospel, and went to Siam as a missionary. After ten years of laborious service in that capacity, he died in Siam in the year 1848, at the age of 40. Rev. Jesse Caswell was a man of fair abilities, a thorough and laborious student, and a devoted christian. For some years before he was ordained, he seemed to be under the conviction that it was his duty to labor as a missionary among the heathens, and never (so it seemed to me) did any man more devotedly and unreservedly resign himself to convictions of duty. He seemed to throw his whole soul into the work. He was obliged to undergo severe trials and privations in his field of labor in Siam; but his efforts, under Providence, were in a good degree successful. We could have desired that he had been longer spared, but such was not the will of Him who doeth all things well. Rev. Jesse Caswell was the first and only missionary to Foreign lands ever sent out from this Congregational Church. While a missionary at Siam, he instructed the King of that nation in the English language. The King became much attached to him, and, against the rules of the Siamese, attended the funeral of Mr. Caswell, and wept like a child. He has kept up a correspondence with the widow since her return to this country, and has sent her valuable presents.

Enoch Caswell, the third and youngest son of Jesse Caswell, Sr., also graduated at Middlebury and entered the ministry. He died at Bennington, N. H., in 1863, and was about 45 years old.



The years of his ministry were mostly spent in New Hampshire, though he preached in Middletown about six months in the time. He died as he had lived, full in the faith once delivered to the Saints.

The two daughters are both dead, they both married John Gray, the youngest some years after the death of the oldest, each left children.

Russel Barber, who married one of Bela Caswell's daughters, was among those who came here soon after the town was organized. He was among the active and useful men here, but had poor health the latter part of his life which kept him at home. He died in 1830, aged 62. He left a large family; two sons and several daughters are now living. Jervis, the oldest son living, was for awhile one of the deacons of the Congregational Church, but has for the last twenty-five years resided in Granville, N. Y. Russel, the youngest son, resides in Middlebury, N. Y. The oldest daughter living, married Rev. Beriah N. Leach, D.D., and lives in Middletown, Conn.; another daughter married Phineas C. Orcutt, and now resides in Jersey City.

Moses Leach, whose name is on the roll of 1801, was early here. He settled on the farm owned and, until recently, occupied by John P. Taylor. He was a member of the Baptist Church, and noted for his honesty and sincerity. His wife was also a member of that church, and in her time was perhaps the most active and influential of the female members. Moses Leach and his wife have been dead many years. They left several children. Rev. Beriah N. Leach, D.D., is the only son now living and resides in Middletown, Conn. He is a Baptist clergyman, and has been in the ministry about forty-five years, four or five of which were spent in his native town, Middletown, Vt.

Reuben Loomis was early here. He came from Connecticut and settled upon the first farm north of the village, now owned and occupied by Royal Coleman, Esq. Sylvanus Stone was the first man who settled there, but he did not remain in town many years. Reuben Loomis died September 24th, 1808, aged 62. He left a son, Enoch Loomis, who lived on his father's homestead until he died, January 21st, 1847, at the age of 74. The daughter

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married Joseph Spaulding, Jr., and was the mother of a large family of children. She has been dead several years. Fitch Loomis left five children: Reuben, who has removed west, and Fitch, who died in Middletown in 1863; Mrs. Henry Gray, Mrs. Thaddeus Terrill and Mrs. Johnson, were the daughters. The Loomis family exerted a very healthful influence in society here, and we can remember them all as peaceful, quiet and useful citizens. They were all members of the Congregational Church, and if they did not have the leading influence which others had, that church is perhaps as much indebted to this family as any other for services, during the last sixty years.

Ezekiel Perry, a brother to Azor Perry, removed here before 1790. He was for a time in Bennington County before coming here. He was in the Bennington battle and severely wounded in one of his feet. He raised a family of eleven children, most of them are still living. Mrs. David Thomas was a daughter of his, and died here in 1844; Mrs. Roswell Buel, another daughter, still resides here; the remainder of the family mostly live in Western New York.

George Oatman, whose name does not appear on the roll of freemen of 1785, was one of the early settlers of the town. He moved here from Arlington in 1785, but not until after that roll was entered upon record. He was one of the first four or five settlers of the town of Arlington, having settled there soon after 1760. Mr. Oatman settled here upon what has since been known as the "Oatman farm," which was then as nature had left it—a rugged forest. He was an industrious man, a man of great physical strength, and had been a brave soldier of the Revolution. He had a family of three sons: Eli, Eliakim and Lyman. He lived to be an old man—he died about 1836. His sons, Eliakim and Lyman, moved West many years ago, and are both dead, leaving families. Eli was about eight years old when his father removed from Arlington, and from that time until his death resided in Middletown. He will be remembered by all of us who knew him as a very amiable, social and agreeable companion, as well as a very useful man. He was not an aspiring man, but a sensible, well to do farmer, had a pleasant word and smiling countenance for all, and





always had the entire confidence of the people of the town for his integrity and good judgment. For many years, he almost constantly held the office of selectman, or overseer, or some other position of trust in the town, and was one of the founders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and one of its ablest supporters until his death. About the year 1800, he married Mary Symonds, a daughter of Joel and Patience Symonds, of Pawlet, and by her had eleven children. Eli Oatman died May 30th, 1851, at the age of 74. His wife lived until February 16th, 1861, when she died at the age of 80. She was a woman very remarkable for her intelligence and purity of character, and to her a large and interesting family are much indebted for those qualities of mind and heart which they possessed, and for which they have been distinguished.

The names of the children of Eli and Mary Oatman, are as follows:—Ira, Orlin, Joel, Calista, Emily, Lucien, Cyril, Ellen, Mary, Jane and Demis.

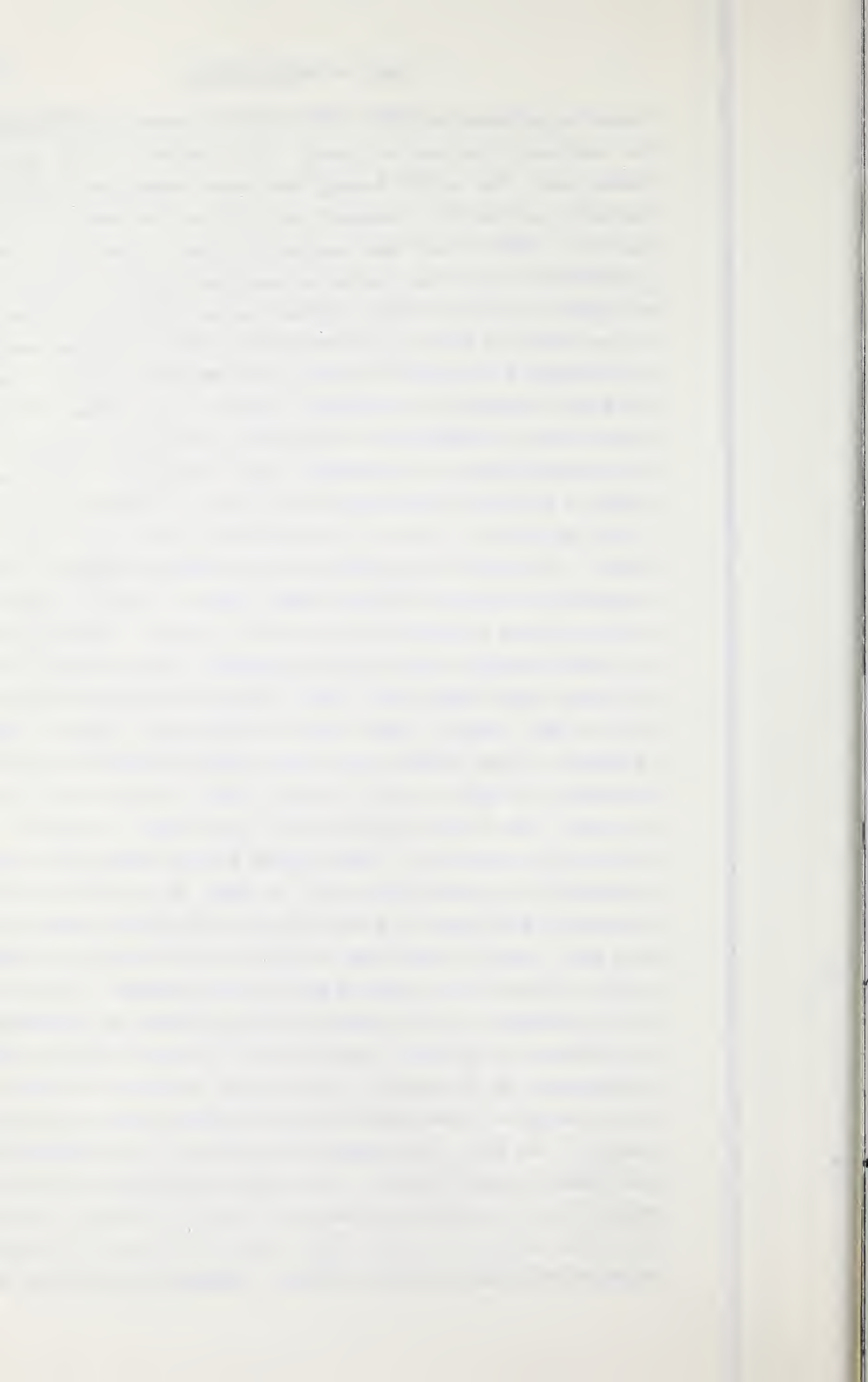
Ira was a farmer, an honest, unambitious man, like his father. He removed to Pontiac, Michigan, many years ago and died there about six years since, leaving five children: Gardner, Emily, Abigail, Lucy and George—all living but Abigail, and reside in Iowa and vicinity.

Orlin, the second son, was well educated, a fine scholar, and unusually prepossessing in his personal appearance. He married a daughter of a clergyman in Rochester, N. Y., and became a professor in a literary institution at the West—and was for many years a popular lecturer. In 1859, while passing through Milwaukee, Wis., he was attacked with cholera and died there. His widow now resides in Evanston, Illinois. He had four children, two daughters are now living; Emma, the oldest, married Fred. Vandercook, and resides in Bennington; Frances, the youngest, married David Vail, of Wisconsin.

Joel, the third son, is a physician. He became eminent in his profession, and distinguished as a man of uncommon energy, and business tact and talent. He commenced the study of medicine in his native town, with Doctor Eliakim Paul; attended two courses of lectures at Castleton, and one or more at New York,



where he graduated in 1832. Before he had received his diploma, he conceived the idea of going into practice in the great Metropolis. His mother having been made acquainted with his intention, and having a mother's anxiety, was seriously troubled about it. She feared that her boy, without experience, and penniless as he then was, was in no condition to go into business in the great city of New York, especially as he then had no friends or acquaintances in that place to lend him aid or influence—and she besought her husband to dissuade him from the attempt. But the father, seemingly unconcerned, replied to the mother, "You needn't worry yourself about Joel, he has got Symonds enough in him to find his way out somewhere," and so it proved. The year 1832, as it will be remembered, was the year in which the cholera raged so terribly in New York and other places in the United States. No sooner had our friend Joel pocketed his diploma, than he started for Bellevue Hospital, then used as a cholera hospital in the city, and fearlessly volunteered his services. This Hospital was filled with those cases; while physicians and others shunned it as they would death itself. The first day that Doctor Oatman was in the hospital, there were twenty-seven deaths. The Alderman of the Ward was so well pleased with the doctor's resolution and skill on the first day, that, on the second, he appointed him Ward Physician, and gave him the right of selecting his associates. This position he held during the prevalence of the cholera in the city. In forty days he had saved the sum of \$300, and more than that, he had gained a position in that short space of time from which he could advance, and did rapidly advance to an extensive and lucrative practice. After he had accumulated a good property by his profession, he gradually relinquished the practice, and devoted his time to the care and management of his funds. He has been, so far as we know, more successful in the accumulation of property than any other native of the town. Fortunate circumstances have undoubtedly aided him to a considerable extent, and probably more than some others of our townsmen, who from poor boys have become wealthy men; but the great secret of his success has been his energy, together with his practical ability. Although not a man of





extensive reading, yet he is a man of extensive knowledge, which he seems to have by intuition and to get by observation. Instead of sitting down and taking time for a scientific and logical investigation of a subject, he seizes upon it and turns it to a practical account at once, and seldom fails in his purpose. He has received the degree of Doctor of Laws, from one of the best Universities in New York, and it is an honor to him well earned and well deserved.

Doctor Oatman married an estimable lady in New York, in 1842, who has been some years dead. He has four children: Mary E., Hydro, Harriet J., and Albert. The doctor and his family still reside in New York, but have spent a portion of the summers in this town for the last twenty years, and until recently upon the old homestead, which has been in the hands of the family until within about a year; and I need not add, that an annual return of Doctor Oatman to his native town will be hailed with pleasure by all his surviving friends and acquaintances here.

Calista, the oldest daughter of Eli Oatman, married Russel Mallary, and moved to Geneva Wisconsin, where she still resides; her husband is dead, and she remains a widow.

Emily married Augustus Knapp, of Birdstown, Ill., she and her husband are both dead.

Lucien died at Middletown, March 3d, 1861, at the age of 45.

Cyril went to Geneva, Wisconsin, when quite young; has been merchandizing there for twenty-five years or more, and successful in his business. He has for many years been a Justice of the Peace, and though not a lawyer by profession, has been the legal adviser for his community. He was never married, but lives with his sister, Mrs. Mallary.

Ellen married Doctor Nathan Deane, of Georgia, Vt. He died some years since leaving one son, and she resides with her brother in New York.

Mary married Joseph Bannister, of Middletown, who died June 13th, 1866, at the age of 41. Mary also resided with her brother in New York.

Jane married S. Willet, of Pawlet. They are both dead. She died in Middletown, of Consumption, July 7th, 1848, at the age of 26.



Mr. Willet was afterwards struck by lightning and killed in a boat at the West.

Demis married Milo Smith, a man living in the West, and widely and favorably known in his region. He left his home at the beginning of the war of 1861, at the unanimous call of his townsmen, to lead them to death or victory. He was in Sherman's campaign, and went and returned Colonel Milo Smith, having repeatedly declined promotion.

As we look back upon that interesting family, as we remember them while all at home upon that old homestead, and followed their history down to the present time, there is a feeling of pleasure and still there arises a feeling of sadness. It is pleasant to realize that so many from one family, in our little town, have become useful members of society, and done their part so well in the great business of life; but it is sad to realize that so many are dead, dying too in the prime of life and in the midst of their usefulness.

At this point would it not be profitable for us, for a moment, to go back to the young society here, when the Oatman family came on to the stage. With them we find Merritt and Horace Clark, A. L. Miner, Ovid Miner, and other members of the Miner families, Beriah N. Leach, the Leffingwell and Brewster families, the Bigelow family, the Caswell and Barber families, and many others then young and vigorous, and, without flattery or vanity, we may say that such an array of youthful talent, vivacity, beauty and character is not often seen. But where are they now? We answer—A large proportion of them have given a good account of themselves. Many are now living and occupying prominent positions; but many have gone to their long homes.

Dyer Leffingwell was also one of the early settlers. He was from Norwich, Conn., and was the first hatter in town, and carried on the business successfully until his death. His shop stood where the dwelling house of Mr. Homer Southwick now stands. Mr. Leffingwell was a valuable man in his time; was not ambitious but an industrious, honest, capable man; attended well to his own affairs, and interested himself in the welfare of the town. He served the town many years as constable and collector of taxes, and twice represented it in the legislature, and was town clerk the





year that he died, 1821. Middletown lost two town clerks by death that year, Barker Frisbie and Dyer Leffingwell.

Mr. Leffingwell was twice married. His second wife was the widow of Ohel Brewster, and a daughter of John Sunderlin. She survived him nearly thirty years. Mr. Leffingwell's large family all removed from this town many years ago, except Harvey Leffingwell, who still resides here, and is now one of the old men of the town.

Perhaps no family or families have made more of the history of Middletown than the Clark families. After the removal of the Wood families they were for many years the most numerous of any others of the same name in the town. Their ancestors were from England. There were three brothers of the name of Clark who first came to Massachusetts Colony some time before the year 1700, of which Thomas Clark was one. Thomas had two sons, Theopholus and Thomas, who removed to the Connecticut Colony and settled in "Old Canterbury." From Theopholus Clark came the Clarks who have lived in Middletown; from Thomas came Isaac Clark (old rifle) and the Clark families of Pawlet.

Theopholus Clark had six sons, viz: Nathaniel, Benjamin, Adam, Theopholus, Jonas and Stephen. Nathaniel had ten children, seven sons and three daughters. Five of those sons removed from Canterbury to Middletown, Vt., soon after the town was organized. They were Asa, Elisha, Rufus, Roswell and Ezra Clark. Asa did not become a permanent resident, but remained two or three years; taught school in the winter and worked out in the summer. They did not all come at the same time. Asa, Elisha and Rufus were here as early as 1785 or 1786. Roswell and Ezra came about two years after. The four brothers who remained were among the solid, substantial men of the town for many years, and assisted in laying the foundation of society here upon correct, moral and religious principals. They were all members of the congregational church. Elisha Clark was for some twenty years a deacon of that church; was the next one chosen after Deacon Jonathan Brewster. Rufus, Roswell and Ezra were hardly less efficient and active. Ezra Clark was a physician, and the first physician who settled in town. He commenced practice





here about 1788 and continued in practice until 1819, when he removed to the state of Ohio. The Clark brothers were not ambitious, aspiring men, but were remarkable for their decision and energy of character, their stern integrity and earnest piety. Their influence was great in the town; yet it was not of the kind that is exerted by politicians, through motives of self interest and aggrandizement, but it was that kind of influence which is created by good examples, good works, and a blameless life.

Deacon Elisha Clark was one of the first victims of the epidemic which prevailed here in 1813. He died at the age of fifty-seven. The four surviving brothers acted as pall bearers on the occasion of his funeral. Asa Clark died in Timmouth about the year 1823. Roswell Clark removed to Castleton about the year 1818, and died there August 12th, 1825, in the sixty-third year of his age. Rufus died in East Poultney about 1837, and Doctor Ezra Clark died in the state of Ohio about 1828. They all had large families; many of them are now holding prominent positions in different parts of the country. Deacon Merlin Clark, of Middlebury, a son of Roswell Clark, is the only representative now known to me in Vermont from that branch of the Clark family, and he well sustains the character of the race.

Jonas Clark, one of the six sons of Theophilus Clark, removed from Canterbury to this place in 1790, though some two years prior to this time two of his sons, Enos and Theophilus (twin brothers) had removed here and prepared the way for their father's family. Jonas Clark had three sons, the two above named and Jonas Clark, Jr., long known as General Clark. Jonas Clark, Senior, was a peaceful, quiet citizen, a member of the baptist church, and was made the clerk of the baptist society at its organization in 1790, the same year that he came here. He died September 23d, 1813, at the age of seventy years.

Enos, Theophilus and Jonas Clark, the sons of Jonas Clark Senior, were all marked with an unusual energy of character. Theophilus died young and left several children, among whom were Simon and Milton Clark, who removed from this place many years ago, Enos was a man of vigorous intellect; he followed the business of his trade, a mason, until his death. He died in Middletown,



at the age of fifty-one. Enos Clark left a family of four sons, Barton, Culver, Ashley and Orson, and two daughters, Mrs. W. W. Cook of Whitehall, N. Y., and Mrs. Hall of Ellisburgh, N. Y. None of the sons are now living but Ashley, who, with Miss Fannie Clark, a daughter of Barton Clark, and Mrs. Isaac L. Gardner, a daughter of Culver Clark, are now the only representatives of the Clark family residing in Middletown. Hon. Orson Clark was born in Middletown, February 2d, 1802. He acquired most of his education in the schools of his native village, but attended an academy a few terms at Northampton, Mass., and at Castleton, Vt. He taught school several seasons, and commenced teaching at sixteen years of age. He studied law with his uncle, General Jonas Clark, and was admitted to the bar at Rutland, at the September Term, 1828, and was in the practice of his profession in Middletown until his decease, which occurred September 20th, 1848. He was a man of good habits, fond of books, a friend to the cause of education, and a good lawyer—though he never had as extensive a practice as his uncle; he did not seek it, but he had a good judgment and was well versed in the elementary principles of law. He represented his native town in the years 1835 and 1836, was town clerk from 1836 to 1842 inclusive, and was one of the senators from Rutland County in the years 1840 and 1841.

In May, 1835, he was married to Amelia Brewster, daughter of Ohel and Eunice (Sunderlin) Brewster, by whom he had two sons, Albert and Warren. Albert is well educated, and now lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Warren is at present in Whitehall, N. Y.; he is an intelligent and promising young man. He was four years in the war of 1861. He enlisted as a private in a cavalry regiment from Illinois, and was discharged as captain of the same company in which he first enlisted. He was at Donnelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and other hard fought battles of the South and West, and gave a good account of himself as he would any where.

General Jonas Clark, the third son of Jonas Clark, Sr., furnishes us, in himself, perhaps the most striking example of untiring industry and indomitable perseverance the town ever had. He was sixteen years old, when he came with his father to Middletown. All the education he ever received at school, was

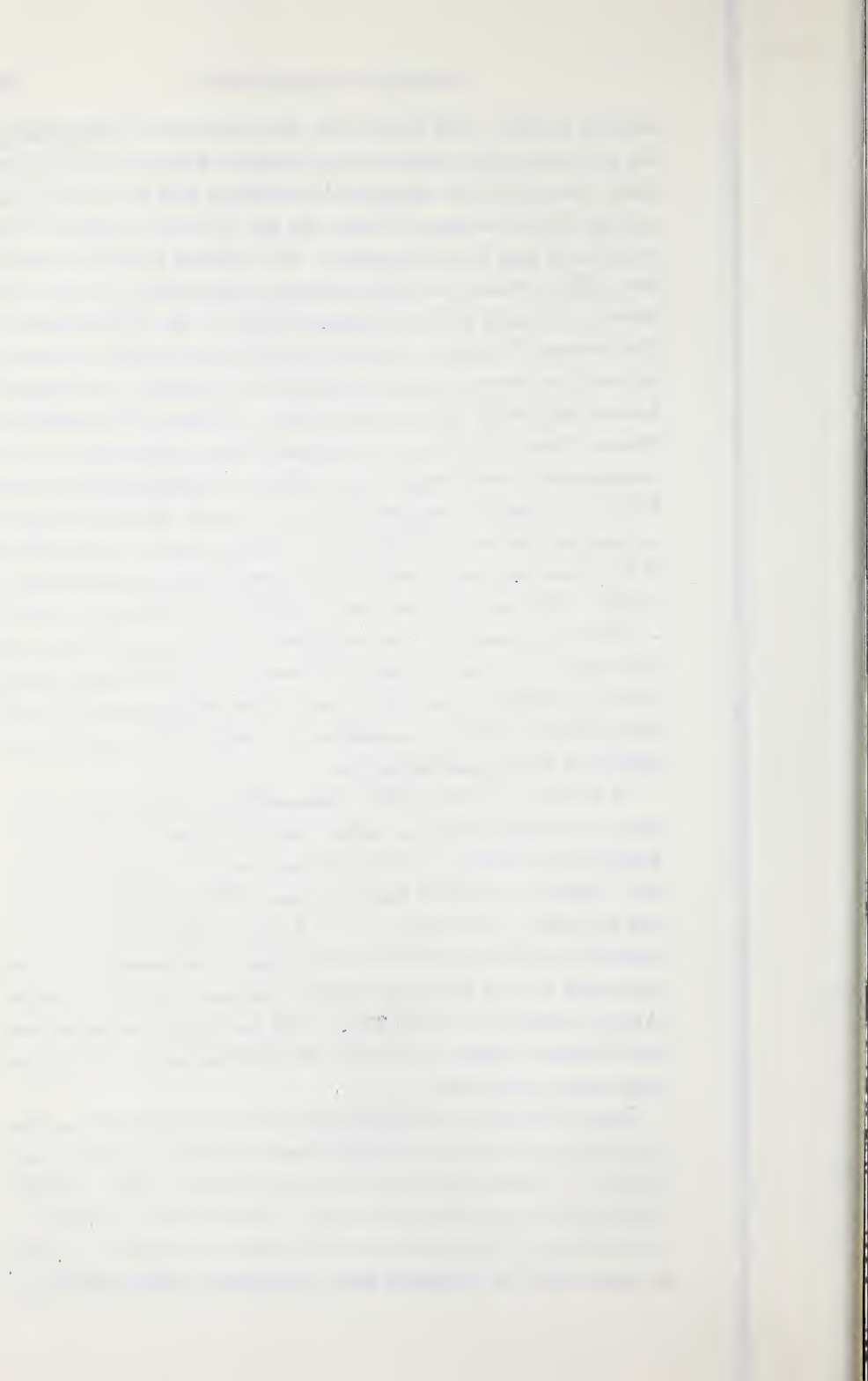




learning to read. His father had the misfortune of being poor; the son learned the mason's trade, which he followed until he was thirty years old, but occupied his evenings and leisure time in getting his education, and used the fire place for a light in the winter, and pine knots in summer. He obtained his legal education while at work at his trade, occupying his evenings and leisure hours in the study of Blackstone and Chitty. He was admitted to the bar some little time after he was thirty years old, and soon acquired an extensive practice, which he continued to have until he was disabled by the infirmities of age. General Clark held the office of State's Attorney, for Rutland County, for sixteen years in succession; was assessor and collector of government taxes in 1819, in a district composed of nine towns in Rutland County; represented the town of Middletown eighteen years; was a justice of the peace forty years, and as such married one hundred and four couples. He was the Democratic candidate for Governor in 1849—had several times been the candidate of his party for Congress in this district. He was a member of three constitutional conventions, the last of which was in 1850, when he was unanimously tendered the presidency of the convention, but could not accept it on account of his age and infirmities.

As a lawyer, General Clark deservedly held a high rank. His early opportunities did not allow him to become as learned as Williams and Phelps, his cotemporaries, but he was no less successful. What he lacked in learning, was made up by his industry and unyielding perseverance. The lawyers of his time well knew when they were to meet him in a suit, they were to meet a lawyer who would be sure to have his side of the case prepared. Judge Williams once said to me, that in his knowledge, he never in a single instance, came to the trial of his cases unprepared, when preparation was possible.

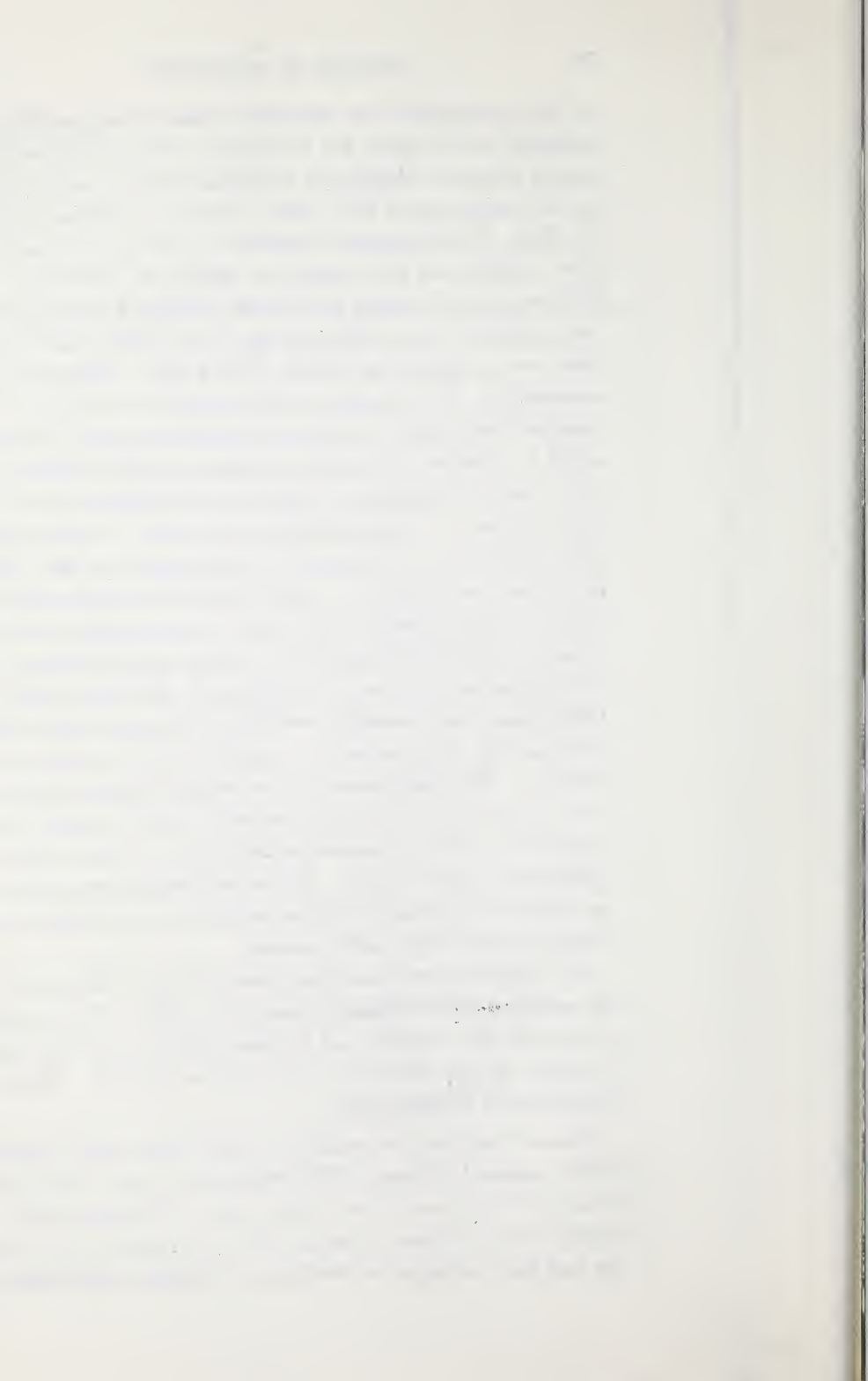
General Clark died at Middletown, February 21st, 1854, at the age of 79 years. Gen. Clark had three sons, Merritt, Horace and Charles. Charles died when but a few years old. Hon. Merritt Clark was born February 11th, 1803. He graduated at Middlebury College in 1823, and entered his father's office as a student at law, where he remained about two years. His health failing



in that pursuit, and the mercantile business being a little more congenial to his tastes, he, in company with his brother Horace, opened a store in Middletown in 1825, and continued in the mercantile business until 1841, when Merritt was elected cashier of the Bank of Poultney, and removed to that town where he has since resided, and since been the cashier of that Bank. They first commenced business here in the building recently purchased and repaired by the Messrs. Grays, but in 1832 built the brick store, now occupied by Mr. E. Vail & Son. They were very successful in their business as merchants in this place. They inherited their father's energy and perseverance, and to this they added a ceaseless and untiring attention to their business. No item, however insignificant, escaped their attention, not so much for its value in a single instance, as to have a plan, a system which should not be deranged by inaccuracies, or any want of proper care and attention. Hon. Merritt Clark represented Middletown in the Legislature three years; was a senator for Rutland County in the State Legislature in the years of 1863 and 1864, and represented the town of Poultney in 1865 and 1866. In 1850 he was the democratic candidate for Congress in this district, and has once or twice been a candidate of the same party for governor. Mr. Clark has not for many years been an active partisan, yet few men in the state are better versed in public affairs, especially in matters connected with finances; in those matters his opinions have great weight. He makes himself very useful in his own town by his financial skill, in assisting the educational institutions there, and other public interests.

Mr. Clark has two sons, Henry and Edward. Henry has been the secretary of the Vermont Senate since 1861. He is also the secretary of the Vermont and Rutland County Agricultural Societies, and is now the editor of the *Rutland Herald*. Edward is a teller in the Poultney Bank.

Horace Clark kept his residence in Middletown until his death, which occurred February 23d, 1852, at the age of forty seven, although his business for some years prior to his decease had been mostly out of this town. For some four years prior to his decease he had been engaged in building the Rutland and Washington

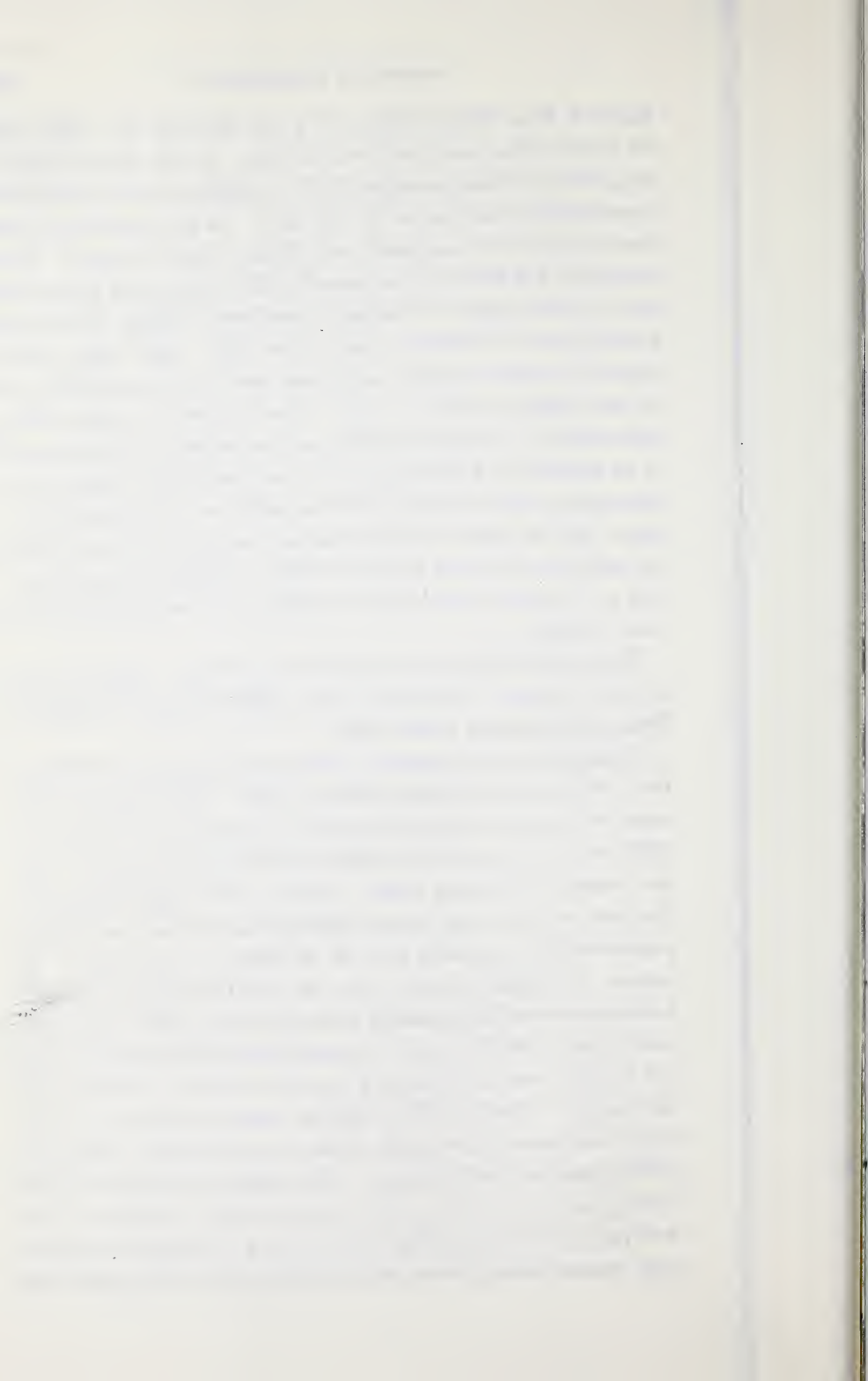


Railroad from Eagle Bridge, N. Y., to Rutland, Vt. This was his favorite enterprise, but it was his last. On the 23d of February, 1848, at the organization of the company, he was elected its superintendent, and one of the directors. In four years from that time the road was completed, and Horace Clark was dead. The amount of toil and labor performed by him in that four years was great, and it may be sincerely questioned whether there was another man in Vermont equal to the task. That other public works of equal and greater magnitude have been constructed even in less time, we shall not deny. But this was a project which encountered a strong opposition, and its ultimate success seemed to be doubted by a large majority of the people, and among them many who, from necessity, had to be relied on for pecuniary assistance. Of the men of means, talent and enterprise, Horace Clark, for awhile, stood almost alone, but with "an unfaltering purpose" and a "resolution which was invincible," he succeeded, and the road was built.

Horace Clark left two sons, Charles and Jonas. They are now in active business; Charles, in the marble business in Rutland, Jonas as a merchant in New York.

Perhaps the most prosperous period in the existence of Middletown was between the years 1800 and 1811. The population had increased from one thousand sixty-six, the number at the census of 1800, to one thousand two hundred and seven, the number when the census of 1810 was taken. This was the largest population the town ever had, and unquestionably it had at that time a larger population than any other town in the county in proportion to its amount of territory, and it also at that time had the largest business interests in proportion to its size of any other town in the county, and indeed it may be sincerely questioned whether it was not at that time in advance of any other town in the county in that respect. Poultney River rises in Tinmouth and runs a westerly course through the center of the town from east to west, furnishing excellent mill privileges. The Miners were located on this stream, in the east part of the town, and John Burnham on the west part; and in the village there were on this stream, and the small stream running down from the hills at the north part of the





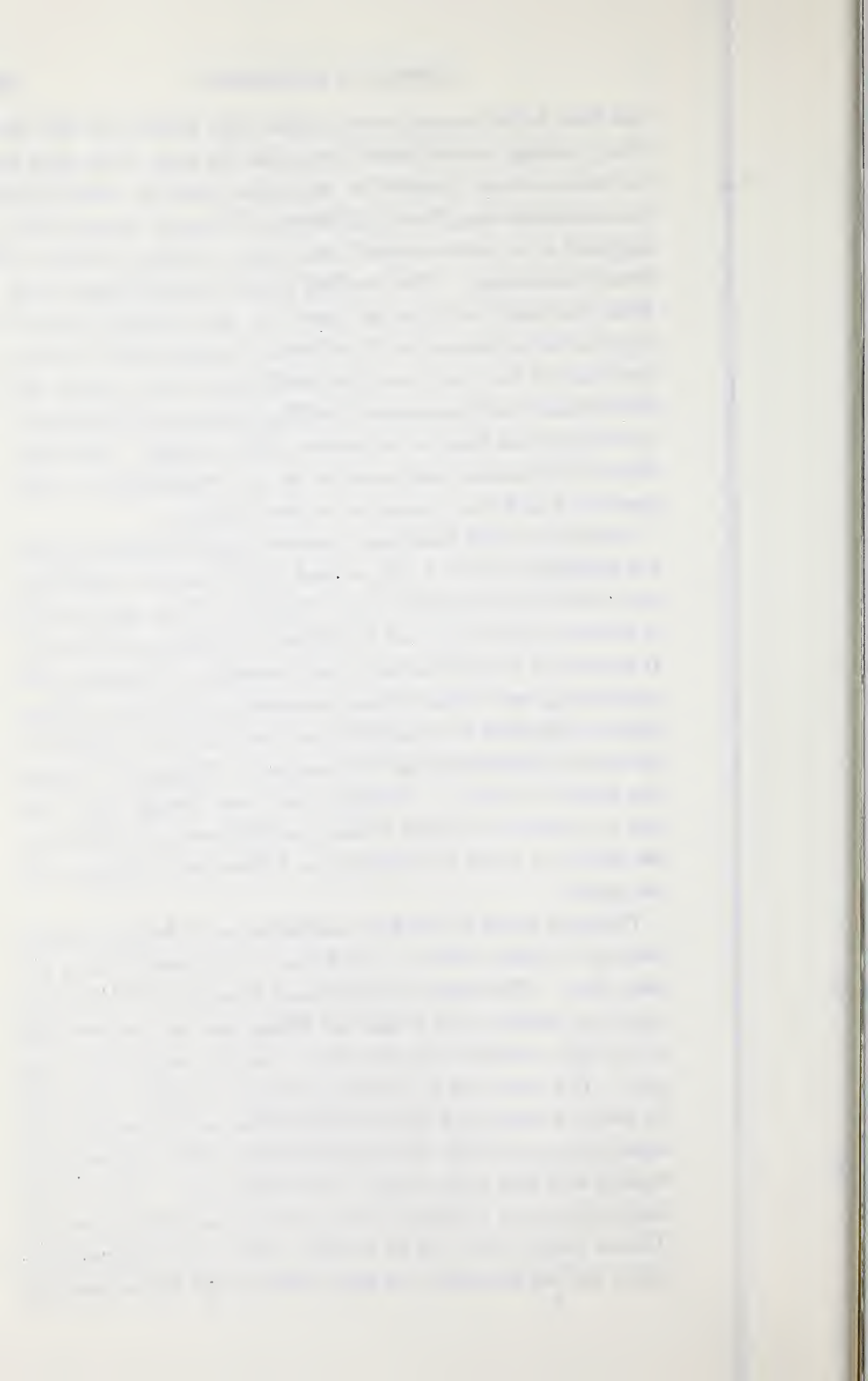
town, and running into the river at the village, two tanneries, clothiers works and carding machine, distillery and other machinery, and all in active operation—and all were conducted by enterprising and competent business men. Burnam, as we have before seen, had a very extensive business for those times, and so had the Miners. There were in the town at the time (1810), four grist mills, three saw mills, two or three forges, two distilleries, two or three clothiers establishments, besides other mills before named, and all were apparently doing business to their utmost capacity. In the village were several mechanics' shops, two taverns, two stores, one kept by a Scotchman by the name of William Semple; the other by James Ives; all was alive with the hum of business. The town had become a central place for this part of Rutland County. Many of the people from the adjoining towns of Poultney, Ira, Timmouth and Wells, came here for their mechanical work, to the mills, and for other business purposes. But this then active, thriving little place received a check by the freshet which occurred in July, 1811, from which it never fully recovered. Its numerous mills and machinery, with the exception of what have since been known as Gray's Mills, then owned by Moses Copeland, were all swept away. Burnam's mills in the west part of the town, as before mentioned consisting of a grist and saw mill, (he had at this time two grist mills) an oil mill, foundry, forge, clothiers works and carding machine, distillery, some mechanics' shops and other buildings attached, were all carried away, with several hundred bushels of grain, a quantity of lumber, and much other property. The stream rose so suddenly that but little was saved. Miner's mill, in the east part of the town had just been undergoing thorough repairs under the superintendence of Henry Gray, who was then a young man and had just completed his first job of work in town at his trade of mill-wright. Mr. Gray lost all he had, which consisted of his chest of tools, and his clothing except what he had on. Orson Brewster had a tannery, and his brother Jonathan a clothiers' establishment, located near where A. W. Gray & Sons' horse power manufactory now stands, which shared the same fate. A few rods above the bridge, in the east part of the village, was a distillery owned by James Ives, and above that a tannery.



The hides in this tannery were in great part saved, and the distillery building was not carried away, but the hogs in the yard, to the number of one hundred or more, went down the stream, and were scattered along from Middletown to Poultney, wherever they happened to be driven ashore; some came out alive, but most of them were drowned. Two dwelling houses—one called the Corbin house, the other the Eldridge house—in the east part of the village, and on opposite sides of the stream running down from the north part of the town, were also carried away; and besides this destruction of mills, machinery, dwelling houses and other property, great injury was done to the lands on those streams. Some portions of the meadow lands were cut up and washed away, stone, gravel and sand were carried on to other portions.

The day on which this freshet occurred, opened bright and clear; but about nine o'clock A. M., a black cloud was seen rapidly rising in the west, accompanied with thunder, and the rain soon fell in torrents, and so continued to fall until the latter part of the day. It seemed, as I have been told, like a succession of thunder showers following each other without intermission, and what may perhaps be considered as remarkable, the heavy rain was confined to the town of Middletown and the west part of Timmouth. Damage was done in Poultney. Poultney river runs through that town, and was swollen by the fall of water in Middletown and Timmouth; but the fall of water in Poultney, as I have been informed, was not great.

The great event of that day was the rescue of fourteen persons from the "Corbin House" just before it was carried off by the rising flood. This house then stood near where M. E. Vail's storehouse now stands, which is near the bridge and on the west side of the little stream which runs down from the north part of the town. This house was at the time occupied by Elihu Corbin and his family, consisting of his wife and children, and his mother, then about seventy years old. She was the mother of Mrs. Babcock, who recently died here at the age of over eighty years. Besides that family, Israel, son of Russel Barber, and several children from the Haskins family, who lived on the hill north of Mr. Lucius Cope-land's, had left the school and gone in there to get shelter from the





rain. The inmates of this house were not aware of their danger until it was upon them, neither were the inhabitants of the village. Besides those who resided in the village, there were many there from without, and all seemed unconscious of approaching danger. The water rose rapidly, especially in this stream on which were the Corbin and Eldridge houses. The first thing which seemed to attract the attention of the inhabitants and cause alarm was the going off of the Eldridge House, which was situated on the east side of this stream and nearly opposite the Corbin house, and nearly north and on the opposite side of the road from where the village school house now stands. Elihu Corbin was in the village and called the attention of the people to the danger his family were in, when they found his house already surrounded by water, and the appearances indicating that this house must soon share the same fate of the Eldridge house. The bed of the stream was about where it now is ; but the water had so risen in a short space of time that there was a strong current on the west side of the house of about seventy feet wide, and between the house and the village, and had become so deep and rapid that fording it was impossible.

The people in the village on being warned of the danger, immediately rallied upon the western shore of this current of water, and at first seemed to look upon the scene before them in despair. This little stream which rises among the hills and mountains in the north part of the town, and is ordinarily so small that fording it even is unnecessary to cross it—a mere step in many places is sufficient—had suddenly swolen to the dimensions of a large river, and the descent was such, in coming down from the hills, that the current in this place was exceedingly rapid and furious, and as if to render the scene still more grand and terrific, there was added the roar of the waters and the dull heavy sounds of rocks and stones striking each other as they were moved along by the resistless current. But what should they do? There was seventy feet of water between them and the house, with a current that no man could withstand a moment, and the house was being rapidly undermined, and already was trembling from the action of the water, and fourteen persons were in it who must in a few minutes be taken



from there or perish in the mad waters. Joseph Fox was at that time engaged with others at the tannery, some rods above, in removing hides to a place of safety, when a messenger came to and stated the condition of things at the Corbin house, and told him that his presence was desired there at once. He went there immediately, and, as he has himself said, suggested getting the liberty pole which was then kept in the shed near the congregational meeting house, and the bell rope from the baptist meeting house. Whether he suggested it or not they were brought there as soon as fleet men could do it. One end of the liberty pole was made fast on the shore, and the other end thrown up stream, and was made to swing around with the current so as to lodge upon some stone and gravel which had been washed up near the door on the west side of the house ; but this did not leave the pole clear from the water ; it dashed over it almost the whole length, or that part of it which was over the water ; but that was the best they could do ; the rescue of those persons in the house must be effected by crossing on that pole or not at all. One end of the bell rope was securely fastened around the body of Mr. Fox, and the other end placed in the hands of trusty men, and Fox undertook the perilous adventure of crossing on that pole to the house. The men holding one end of the rope had directions that if he should fall from the pole, or be swept from it by the water to draw him ashore. He could not walk on it, as possibly he might if it had been entirely above the water, but undertook and succeeded in getting over as he would climb a standing pole. Mr. Fox was under water a portion of the time while crossing, and was very much exhausted ; the blood started freely from his mouth and nose. He opened the door of the house, and raised his end of the liberty pole and put it in the doorway, and that raised the pole out of the water. He then took the end of the rope which had been fastened to his body and fastened it to the house at a convenient height above the pole to hold on to while walking on it ; the other end of the rope was made fast at a corresponding height on the shore. At the same time the men on shore had procured some sticks of timber, and those they and Fox together managed to get along side of the pole and fastened to it. All this was accom-

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plished with the utmost haste, but it formed a bridge over which those fourteen persons were all taken off and saved. In fifteen minutes after the last person reached the shore, the house was swept away by the flood.

A question has arisen, and some dispute as to whether Joseph Fox brought off those persons from the house? That question, it seems to me, is comparatively of small importance. The great feat of that occasion was the first crossing on that pole submerged as it was in a furious current of water, and nothing could have been effected without it. This was done by Joseph Fox if witnesses, both dead and living, can be relied on; and it has often been said to me that no other man on the ground, even with the courage to have undertaken it, had the physical ability to accomplish it. Mr. Fox was then a young man; had been brought up a sailor in one of the seaport towns of Connecticut; had great physical strength for a man of his size, and was agile as a cat. There were other men there, and all were doing all they could do. Among the active men present were Russel Barber, Jonas Clark, Jonathan Morgan, Charles Stoddard and Simon Clark. After Mr. Fox had crossed and the pole had been raised, the rope fastened to the house, in the manner above given, to hold on to while walking, and the sticks of timber placed alongside the pole and fastened to it, others crossed over and assisted in getting off the inmates of the house. The children were carried; the adults walked across, as they were led or guided by Fox and others. "Old Mother Corbin," at her own request, was the last to leave the house. Mr. Fox said, when he first entered the house, he found her quietly smoking her pipe, apparently unconcerned, and while she seemed rejoiced at the prospect of saving the others, seemed to have little or no anxiety for herself. Mr. Fox lived to be an old man, and died in Middletown about two years ago. May he long be remembered for his heroic and daring conduct on this occasion; but for him those fourteen persons probably would have then perished.

A man by the name of Orrin Cleaveland was drowned on this occasion; about the time they started for the liberty pole and bell rope, Cleaveland started with some others and went some rods above and found a tree which had been uprooted and fallen across



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the stream Cleaveland thinking that possibly the Corbin House might be reached from the other side, undertook to cross on this tree, but was carried down the stream. His body was afterwards found nearly divested of clothing.

Since writing the foregoing, Dea. Menira Caswell, of Castleton, has put into my possession two letters which he has recently received from two of the old inhabitants on the subject of that flood. One is from Dea. Jervis Barber, well known to many of you. I would like to copy it entire, but for want of time must omit a portion of it.

He writes :—" I am requested to give the facts and incidents which came under my observation in the flood in Middletown in 1811. I was then seven years old, my brother Israel was a year and a half older. The day on which the freshet occurred we went to school in a large two story house, then owned by William Semple, which stood directly opposite the school house east of the village, and on the bank of the stream—it was called the Eldridge house. The teacher, fearing danger, dismissed the school a little before noon. About three o'clock in the afternoon this Eldridge house was swept away by the rising flood; myself, brother Israel, Harley and Ezra Haskins, two other school children stood in the road in front of it at the time. We then went down the road towards the bridge and observed Corbin's children, who seemed to be enjoying the scene very much. It was proposed by some one of our number to take shelter in the Corbin house, and with them enjoy the scene. We all made for the house, and my brother and the two Haskins boys went through the water, which was already running west of the house, but my legs were not long enough to ford it, and I backed out. Soon after that I called to my brother to leave the house, as the water was rising fast. He made the attempt but it was too late—he was obliged to turn back with fear and alarm depicted on his countenance.

At this point my own observation ceased, though I could but observe that the little plot of ground around the house, not covered with water, was rapidly growing smaller and smaller until it was entirely lost to my view, and no longer wishing to look upon the raging element which I believed would soon sweep into eternity



my brother and those with him. I went into the house of a Mr. Fuller, which then was standing about where widow Burnam's house now is, for shelter and sympathy. Mr. Fuller was in the village, and while going there those in the house made signs to him of distress, but he did not heed them.

The last time I saw Mr. Fox he told me all about the rescue of those persons in the Corbin house; that he was in the tannery above assisting in saving some hides when word came to him that Corbin's family would soon be swept away unless rescued; that he immediately hastened to the spot—found a multitude collected on the bank of the stream—but nothing doing towards their rescue, and in fact all were agreed that nothing could be done; but when the liberty pole was suggested it was brought to the spot at once."

Deacon Barber writes that Mr. Fox told him that, "when about half way across the pole the body of Mr. Cleaveland, who had fallen into the stream above, came floating down and struck him and turned him from the upper side of the pole; that the man hold of the rope seeing the body floating down supposed it was Fox and drew him ashore; that he (Fox), as soon as he could get breath sprang again for the pole; the men held him for a moment, telling him it was impossible to cross, but he released himself from them, sprang to the pole, and the next time succeeded in getting over."

The other letter to which I have alluded is from Mrs. Priscilla (Barber) Leach. She is the sister of Deacon Jervis Barber. I copy a portion of that letter as it aids much in bringing out the facts in relation to that exciting and interesting affair. From Mrs. Leach I get the date, that is the day of the month. She says: "The 'flood,' as it was called, occurred on the 22d of July, as I had occasion to know from a minute made with chalk on the walls of the room by my father the next morning."

In writing of the affair at the Corbin house, she says: "The family of Elihu Corbin were in the house, consisting of his aged mother, his wife and children, and my oldest brother Israel and other school children were there, in all to the number of fourteen. There seemed no help for them, and men withdrew from the scene, so as not to witness the final catastrophe. My father could see





Israel on a high door step, and supposed that Jervis was also there. Mr. Corbin was restrained by force from plunging into the stream. By whom the liberty pole was suggested as a means of relief I cannot say, but it was brought and thrown across the stream, when Joseph Fox, with ropes about his person, one end of which were in strong hands, and thus he periled his life in a successful effort to reach the other side. He secured the end of the pole, when others walked over to the rescue, foremost among whom were my father, who, catching up brother Israel placed him on the shoulders of Mr. Fox, who bore him safely over. He, Israel playfully said, "rode over the river on a Fox." Some remained in the house to prepare the women and children for their perilous voyage, while others were making the voyage, with a child clinging to their necks, others assisted the women to walk the slippery pole. "Granny Corbin," as she was familiarly called, remained until the last, having taken refuge in the comforting belief "that if she was to be saved, she would be saved." She was taken from the house and put upon the pole, a man supporting her on either side, and guiding her steps she got safely over."

There were other exciting scenes in town on that day. The tannery belonging to Deacon Orson Brewster, situated as we have before seen where the horse power manufactory now is, was also surrounded by water. There were some six or eight persons there and before they were aware of it a current of water thirty or forty feet wide was running on the north side of the tannery, which, with the main stream, completely shut them in. They soon by signals called men to their assistance, who were enabled to get across the current a long stick of timber which, almost at the same moment, had floated down stream to them. A man by the name of Farmer, who was in the tannery, was the first man to attempt the crossing on the timber. The stick not being securely placed turned and let him into the water. He was carried down the stream, but was rescued before serious injury was done to him. The others in the tannery all came safely off.

David Thomas was then building the house now owned by A. G. Hoadley. During the day he started to go to Mr. Bigelow's,

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across the bridge a little above the tannery, and as he stepped from the last plank on the south end of the bridge, it went off.

The disastrous effects of this flood were severely felt in Middletown for many years, and indeed the town, as a place of business, never fully recovered from it. John Burnam, who had been the leading business man of the town, was becoming an old man, and felt disinclined to undergo the necessary labor and care which would be required to start anew in so extensive a business as he had done. He however rebuilt his forge and saw mill, which were in operation some years after that, but without the activity which his former mills had shown. Miner's mills were rebuilt, but never manifested the same activity afterwards.

A good many men were thrown out of employment, and were obliged to seek it elsewhere. At the census of 1820 we find the population of the town to be one thousand thirty-nine, a falling off of one hundred and sixty-eight from the census of 1810. This was undoubtedly owing "in a great measure, if not entirely to the sad effects of the freshet in 1811. Yet, notwithstanding the great destruction of property, Middletown continued to be an active, lively little place for many years afterwards.

For two or three years following 1811, it was very sickly here, more so probably than has ever been known here before or since. An epidemic which in that time prevailed in many parts of the state carried to the grave many of the best citizens of the town. Aside from that time there has not at one time, to my knowledge or information, been any unusual amount of sickness.

It has been said to me by the "old folks" that "politics run high here during the war of 1812." Very likely; politics always did "run high" in Middletown, when they run at all. Every town, as well as every individual, has a character of its own. It is a kind of individuality, and belongs to towns collectively as much as to individuals singly. One trait in the character of Middletown manifests itself wherever anything like a controversy occurs, whether in politics or anything else—they fight it out in earnest—they make no child's play of it, but each party enters the contest with a spirit that shows a determination to win. As we say sometimes of children who inherit the traits of character of their





ancestors, "they came honestly by it." The early settlers of this town, who founded the institutions here were as pure a set of men as ever lived in New England, but they were unusually energetic, persevering and determined. They are long since in their graves, but "their works do follow them."

This may also be said of the people of Middletown: whenever they undertake to do anything, they do it thoroughly and well. The alacrity with which they concentrated their efforts upon any public enterprise has long since become proverbial. If a public meeting is had, it is not only fully attended, but is conducted with that order, decorum, and with the efficiency seldom equalled, even in the large towns of the state.

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#### ECCLESIASTICAL.

At this point I will give the ecclesiastical history of the town. I shall be obliged for want of space to abridge from what I had originally written.

The first church organized in Middletown was the congregational church. The exact date of its organization I am unable to give, but on the cover of the first book of records I find the date of May, 1782, and I found the date of the organization given as 1782 in a religious miscellany published about 1840. It is probable that the church was formed in that year. The first record which I find bears date May 26th, 1783. There was a meeting of the church at that date at which Gideon Miner was chosen moderator, and Joseph Spaulding, clerk. The first record is dated at Wells, and it was known as the congregational church of Wells until the organization of Middletown in the fall of 1784. It may now be impossible to give the names of the first members of the church, or those who became members by the organization, but I have become satisfied that the following were among them. I give the names in the order in which they appear on the record.

William Frisbie, Stephen Wood, Joseph Spaulding, Gideon Miner, Timothy Hubbard, Jonathan Brewster, Abel White, Increase





Rudd, William Frisbie, Jr., Elisha Gilbert, Jonathan Mehurin, Richard Haskins, Nathan Record, Reuben Searl, Thomas French and Benjamin Haskins. There were probably about the same number of females as males, but it is more difficult to designate them than the males.

Now, then, might it not be profitable for us to stop a moment and take a view of the situation here at the time this church was formed. If it was in 1782, it is not probable that there was to the amount of seventy-five acres of land cut over within the present limits of the town. No framed houses had been built; their rude habitations were of logs, and yet here in this then wilderness, a church was formed. Those men had come here to make for themselves and their families permanent homes. And we need no other evidence of their ideas of the importance of sustaining religious institutions than the fact that they established a church almost at the outset of the settlement.

The first meeting house was a log house. It was erected near the south east corner of the burial ground; when it was built I cannot say, but it was there in the fall of 1784. The meeting which organized the town, November 17th, 1784, was held in that house. Whether it was built by the congregationalists alone, or by them and the baptists combined, I cannot say, but they probably united in building it.

Jonathan Brewster was the leading man in forming the church, and was the leading man in it for more than twenty years afterwards. There were others in the church of equal ability, but he was remarkable for taking a deep interest in the affairs of the church, and devoting to it much of his time. He was the first deacon of the church. For twenty-one or twenty-two years after the church was formed, it was without a pastor. During this time Deacon Brewster watched over it as he would a child of his own; and it is worthy of remark, that during this time the church gradually gained in members and strength. Meetings were held regularly, as the records show, and were well attended. Their communion services were probably as faithfully and regularly attended to as they have since ever been in that church. Rev. Ithamar Hubbard usually administered on those occasions. He was the first



settled minister over the congregational church of Poultney, and it has been said was almost as much attached to this congregational church as to his own. He had two sisters in this church—the wives of William and Joel Frisbie.

Not long after the church was organized there were others united with it, whom we might almost class with the pioneers—among whom were Elisha and Rufus Clark. Elisha Clark was early made a deacon of the church, and was a very faithful and efficient member, as were all the Clark brothers of that family.

The early members of the congregational church, as well as the baptist church, were men of the puritan stamp—firm, decided and unyielding in their principles and religious doctrines; and prompt, faithful and constant in their attention to religious duties, and the ordinances. They adhered strictly to their rules of discipline. If any member of the congregational church was absent from the communion service, Deacon Brewster would start on Monday morning and learn the cause of it; but at the same time there was that interest in the welfare of each other, that care and watchfulness and brotherly affection, that we would do well to imitate.

A little later we find Lewis, Lampson, Joel and Gideon Miner, Jr., added to the church; also Orson Brewster, Fitch Loomis, Joseph Spaulding, Jr., Joseph Brown, Jesse and Ziba Caswell, and many others.

Quite early the congregational society was formed, but I have been unable to find the early records and cannot give the date. In 1796 a meeting house was built upon the “green” or common some hundred feet south of where the congregational house now stands. The congregational society had previously purchased an acre of ground for a meeting house lot; which included what is now known as “the green,” and which they now have the title to. It was deeded to them by Deacon Elisha Clark. Up to this time (1796) meetings had been held in the log meeting house, and in private dwellings.

I should judge from the records that it was with a good deal of effort that the people succeeded in building their first house of worship after the log house. The congregationalists and baptists united in building it, and they were some two years about it after





it was commenced, and four or five years after it was seriously contemplated.

I have before me a report of the congregational society's committee on the subject of building that house—made November 10th, 1794—from which I take a few lines, which will call to the recollection of some of us the appearance of that old house.

“The house shall be furnished to the turn of the key by the 1st of October, 1796, in the following manner. The lower part shall consist of twenty-six pews and four body seats in front of the square. In the galleries there shall be a row of pews adjoining the walls of the house, and the rest of the space suitably taken up with seats; also a pulpit and canopy shall be erected, and turned pillars under the galleries, which shall be painted blue, together with the canopy and breast work in front of the galleries. The outside of the house shall be glazed and painted, and stone steps shall be erected by the first of October, 1795. The body of the house shall be painted white, and the roof red; and painted equal to Graham's old house, in Rutland, and the joiner work shall be equal to that of the west parish meeting house, in Rutland aforesaid.”

This report was signed by Bela Caswell, Luther Filmore and Joel Miner, (they were a committee to devise plans) and was adopted by the society in the form of Resolutions. Some of us remember the old house so well, that we know that the above plan was adopted in the construction of the house.

There was once a fund belonging to the congregational society. It was created by the members themselves. It was got up through the influence of Joel Miner and others as a stock concern, divided into shares of twenty-five dollars each, and the members took as many shares as they chose and paid in the money or gave their notes. This fund was raised in this way soon after 1800, and amounted to about \$5,000; but from some cause this fund was entirely exhausted soon after 1830.

January 26th, 1804, Orson Brewster and Gideon Miner, Jr., were elected deacons of the church. At the same meeting the church voted “to choose a committee of three to make proposals to Rev. Henry Bigelow for settlement.” May 31st, 1805, we



find the following record: "After hearing the christian experience of Henry Bigelow, a candidate for the ministry, the church voted satisfied, and passed the following resolution: *Resolved*, that the church entertain a high sense of the abilities of Henry Bigelow, a candidate for the ministry from the town of Colchester, Connecticut, now residing in this town, as a preacher of the gospel, and we are desirous to unite with the society to call him to settle with this church."

To carry this into effect the church, on their part, appointed Deacons Jonathan Brewster and Elisha Clark, Joseph Spaulding and Joel Frisbie, a committee to unite with a committee from the society in presenting Mr. Bigelow a call to become their pastor. The call was presented and accepted, and Mr. Bigelow was ordained September 5th, 1805, and became the first settled minister over the congregational church in Middletown.

Mr. Bigelow remained the pastor of this church until his death, which occurred June 25th, 1832. His ministry in the main was, in our opinion, successful. That Mr. Bigelow was a man of superior ability never was questioned to my knowledge by any one who ever heard him preach. He was a graduate of Yale College, well educated in the doctrines of the bible, was truly orthodox, and firm in his religious sentiments, an eloquent speaker, and certainly a man of great power in the pulpit. He had his faults as well as the rest of us. He was sometimes accused of levity. He was very social in his disposition, a ready wit, and would sometimes descend to that kind of joking conversation which perhaps did not well become a minister of the gospel. But in the pulpit, or in any religious meeting he never appeared otherwise than as a sincere, earnest, christian man. It was said of him "that when he was in the pulpit, it seemed as though he never ought to come out, and when he was out as though he never ought to go in."

During Mr. Bigelow's ministry there were several interesting revivals in the church, and among them one in 1831, which was peculiarly interesting. Mr. Bigelow's health began to fail as early as the spring or early summer of 1831. He seemed conscious that a disease was fastening itself upon him which would soon terminate his existence, and as appeared to me, summoned all his





power and energies for a final effort in the cause of his Master. His usual habit of jesting was abandoned, and in the place of it he occupied his time in sober reflection and godly conversation. His sermons during that summer were unusually effective, and he was probably the instrument of awakening an extraordinary religious interest in this church. On the first Sabbath of September, 1831, twenty four were added to the church, and on the first Sabbath of November following nineteen more were added. After Mr. Bigelow's death, an obituary notice appeared in the papers, which was written by the Rev. Stephen Martindale, then of Timmouth, his long and intimate friend. It was as follows:

"At Middletown, Vt., Rev. Henry Bigelow, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, the thirtieth of his ministry. Henry Bigelow was born of reputable parents in Marlboro, Conn., Febr'y 20th, 1777. He graduated at Yale College in 1802. Studied for the ministry with Rev. Chas Backus, D. D., and was ordained over the congregational church in Middletown in 1805. In his death his widow and numerous family have lost a kind, affectionate, faithful and endeared husband and father. Society, a plain, argumentative, powerful and persuasive herald of the gospel; the church a pastor indeed; clear, pungent and eloquent in his pulpit services; always alive in the defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. The cross was his hope in life, his support through a protracted and often severe illness, and his unutterable consolation in death. In view of his death bed scene it may be said, "precious in the sight of the Lord are the death of his saints."

The church during the ministry of Mr. Bigelow, embracing a period of about twenty-eight years, was much larger than it now is. It contained a goodly number of members, noted for their wisdom, piety and devotion, and the church during this period was in the main prosperous.

Some little time after the death of Mr. Bigelow a Rev. Mr. Stone preached here about six months, but the church did not choose to settle him.

Rev. Guy C. Sampson preached here about two years, commencing some time in 1833. Mr. Sampson is still living, but for some years has not been in the ministry.





October 30th, 1833, Menira Caswell, Jervis Barber and Reuben Loomis were elected deacons of the church. The record gives as a reason for these elections, that Deacon Miner had removed to Ohio, and Deacon Brewster was about to remove. Deacon Brewster removed to Northampton, Mass., in the spring of 1835.

Rev. John A. Avery came to this place in the spring of 1836, and was settled over this church. He was dismissed, and left here in the fall of 1841, and went to Onondaga, N. Y., and lived there and at Syracuse since. Mr. Avery was a sincere, earnest, good man, a faithful pastor, and has been affectionately remembered by many members of this church. He has been dead about two years.

Rev. B. Reynolds came here in September, 1842, and preached here until May, 1844.

Rev. Mr. Payne came here in December 1846 and preached here about one year.

Rev. John H. Beckwith was settled over this church in the fall of 1848, and was dismissed in the fall of 1855. He was the pastor of this church longer than any one has been, except Mr. Bigelow. It was during his ministry that the congregational meeting-house was removed to where it now stands, and repaired.

Rev. Enoch Caswell, a native of the town, preached to this church about six months in the year 1856, after which he returned to New Hampshire where he had hitherto labored.

Rev. Calvin Granger came here in the fall of 1858, and was installed over this church. He was dismissed by an ecclesiastical council in April, 1864, and is now the pastor of the congregational church in Hubbardton. It was during Mr. Granger's ministry that an addition of sixteen feet in front was made to the meeting-house, with the spire, and a fine bell was procured.

Rev. M. Martin preached here about a year, commencing in September, 1865.

Rev. G. Myrick came here in the fall of 1866, and is the present pastor of this church.

Deacons Caswell, Barber and Loomis, some years subsequent to their election, removed from here. Julius Spaulding was elected to fill the vacancy occasioned by the removal of Deacon Caswell.



Deacon Spaulding afterwards removed to Poultney. Thaddeus Terrill held the office of deacon in the church for several years, and now resides near Rochester, N. Y. The present deacons of the church are Asahel Spaulding, John Q. Caswell and Dyer Leffingwell.

The clerks in their order from the organization of the congregational church, are Joseph Spaulding, Thomas French, William Frisbie, Jr., Joseph Rockwell, Gideon Miner, Jr., Jesse Caswell, F. Kellogg, Moses King, Menira Caswell, Harvey Leffingwell and Jay B. Norton, the present clerk.

The number of members at the present time are forty-six.

The baptist church in Middletown was organized in 1784. It is one of the oldest baptist churches in the State, if not *the* oldest. From about 1790 until 1802 it was a large church; it then embraced in its communion members residing in the towns of Wells, Poultney, Timmouth and Ira. In 1802, thirty-four or thirty-five members, residents of Poultney, by vote of the church, had leave to withdraw, and form a church in that town, which they did. There were also a good many members residents of Timmouth up to a later date than 1802. The first meeting of the baptist church, or the first of which we have any record, Caleb Smith was elected moderator, and Thomas McClure, clerk. Caleb Smith appears to have been the leading man in the baptist church from its organization until his death, which occurred Nov'r 10th, 1808. He usually acted as moderator in the absence of the minister, and was the first deacon of the church. I should judge from the records, that he was an active, faithful and efficient member, and held a position in the baptist church similar to that of Deacon Jonathan Brewster in the congregational church. He was not a noisy man, but undoubtedly an efficient worker in laying the foundations of the institutions in the settlement.

Among the first members of the baptist church were Caleb Smith, Thomas McClure, John Sunderlin, Gamaliel Waldo, Hezekiah Mallary, Zacheus Mallary, Nathaniel Mallary, Daniel Ford, Asher Blunt, David Wood, Ephraim Foster, Josiah Johnson, Nathan Walton and Jonathan Haynes.

Jonathan Haynes was quite early elected a deacon of this church,





but did not accept the office for the reason, probably, of his physical infirmities, occasioned by a terrible wound which he received in Bennington in 1777. Yet he was a useful man in the church while he lived, held many important positions, and was regarded as a sincere, ardent and devoted christian.

Daniel Ford, who, I understand, was the father of Nathan Ford, and the grandfather of Joel Ford, was elected deacon to supply the place that the church intended to have filled with Mr. Haynes. Deacon Ford, I have been informed, was an honest, good christian man.

Gamaliel Waldo was an efficient man in the Baptist church. He was one of those decided, stern, resolute men, who was not to be moved by any outside influences. And this, to a great extent, was the character of all, or nearly all, of the early members of both this and the congregational denomination. They had a purpose which they resolutely followed. Both churches were formed early, and at a time and under circumstances that we should hardly supposed would have admitted of prosperity; but they at once sprung into life and activity, and perhaps they were as successful the first year of their existence as they have ever since been in the same period of time.

The Baptist church was without a minister until 1790—during which time Rev. Hezekiah Eastman seems to have administered at communion seasons, and performed the rites of baptism. Where Mr. Eastman lived I have been unable to learn.

August 6th, 1790, the baptist church voted to give a call to Rev. Sylvanus Haynes, of Princetown, Mass., to become their pastor. The Baptist society which was formed in 1790 joined the church in the call. Deacon Caleb Smith was appointed on the part of the church, and Jonas Clark on the part of the society to perform this duty. Mr. Haynes accepted the call, and I am disposed to copy his communication to the church, signifying his acceptance, as it contains facts which are important as history, which reads as follows :

“ TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MIDDLETOWN.

*Dear Brethren,*—Matters have been so arranged in the Kingdom of God's Providence, that we held an interview together



a little more than a year ago, at which time I received an invitation by Deacon Smith, who was then a part of the standing committee of the church to provide preaching, to come and preach with them a certain time. Some time after I returned home I received a letter from Deacon Smith signifying that the church fully concurred with him in inviting me to come. Accordingly I set out, and on the 24th of March last, I arrived safe at this place ; and after preaching five months here I have received an invitation to take the pastoral charge of this church and society. The invitation on the part of the church was signed by Deacon Smith, on the part of the society by Jonas Clark.

In the first place I would present my most hearty thanks to the church and society for the kind respect with which they have treated me, and I acknowledge with much gratitude the kind treatment I have received from the Congregational church and society.

In answering the church and society, I shall give some of the considerations which have influenced me in accepting your call.

SYLVANUS HAYNES."

Mr. Haynes was ordained soon after this—August 26th, 1790,—and remained as the pastor of the church until 1817, a period of twenty-seven years. The Baptist society bought a piece of land for him of Captain Joseph Spaulding, the same now owned by Reuben Mehurin, and Mr. Haynes commenced living on it in a log house. Besides attending to his pastoral duties, he did a good deal of work on his land.

During the ministry of Mr. Haynes in this place the Baptist church and society were prosperous. Mr. Haynes left this town in 1817, and went to western New York. He left before my recollection. I never knew him, but from all I have heard of him from the old people, of both his own and other denominations, I had formed this opinion of him, viz : That he was a faithful minister of the gospel, was successful in his labors here, and was a man of fair education and abilities. But from some investigation I have made during the last few months, I should be inclined to put a





higher estimate upon his abilities, than the impressions I had received from the old people here would permit me to do. I find he was the author of several religious works, which at the time gave him a good reputation as a writer in his denomination. He preached the election sermon before the legislature of Vermont in October, 1809. That sermon was printed by a vote of the legislature. I have recently seen a copy of it and read it. If my judgment can be relied on, it is a very able, appropriate and well written document.

To Mr. Haynes belongs the honor of being the first settled minister of the baptist church, and the first minister settled in Middletown. He preached in the log meeting house and at private houses until, what has since been known as the Congregational house was completed in 1796, when he preached in that until the Baptist house was built in 1806.

After Mr. Haynes left Rev. Seth Ewens supplied the church about two years.

Rev. Isaac Bucklin was settled over the baptist church in 1821, and was the pastor until 1828, when he removed from here.

Rev. Mr. Fuller, Rev. Linus J. Reynolds and Rev. G. B. Day, each preached here between 1828 and 1832. The Rev. Mr. Day was ordained here. He was a very zealous man, and was here during the revival in 1831. There were on one day in September, 1831, thirty-six persons baptized and received into the church.

Rev. Mr. Soullard next preached in this church. He was here about three years, and went to Pawlet sometime in 1837, where he now resides. He has since given his attention mostly to farming.

Rev. Mr. Haskell, formerly connected with the Literary and Theological Institution of New York, followed Mr. Soullard, but only preached here about six months.

Rev. E. B. Bullard was the next minister here. He came in 1839 and remained about two years. He was a brother of George W. Bullard, who more recently resided here. He was well educated, and a very devoted man. After leaving here he went to Birmah as a missionary, and died there.





Rev. Robert Myers preached here about four years, commencing some time in the year 1841. Soon after leaving this town he became a lawyer, but is now again in the ministry.

Rev. R. O. Dwyer came here about 1846, and preached about three years. Mr. Dwyer was a well meaning man, and doubtless designed to discharge his duty faithfully as a minister of the gospel. He removed to a place near Saratoga, N. Y. He became a chaplain in one of the New York regiments in the war of 1861, and died in the service of his country. His only son was a soldier in the same regiment, and was killed in battle about the time of his father's death.

Rev. M. J. Smith preached here in 1849 and 1850. While Mr. Smith was here the Baptist society thoroughly repaired their house of worship. Mr. Smith has since died.

Rev. J. J. Peck followed him, and preached here two or three years.

Rev. Beriah N. Leach, D. D., removed to this town in 1855, and was pastor of the Baptist church about five years. Mr. Leach is a native of this town, and went into the ministry as early as 1819. During the time of his ministry, he was for some years principal of an academy in western New York. He now resides in Middletown, Conn., where he has heretofore spent a portion of the time of his ministry. Since Mr. Leach left, Rev. Mr. Fren-year preached here a while. Rev. Thomas Tobin is the present minister.

After the death of Deacon Smith and Deacon Ford, Jonathan Barce was elected to that office which he held until his death which was about 1847. Beriah Newland, Jeremiah Rudd, Spencer Nicholson, Benajah Mallary, Peleg Seamans and Nathaniel Clift, have each held the office of deacon. Alpheus Haynes was elected and ordained a deacon of the Baptist church in 1836, and has held the office since. He is at present the only deacon in the church. Of the clerks there have been Thomas McClure, Jonathan Barce, David G. McClure, Harry B. McClure, David Spafford, Robert R. Woodward, and Ira Frost, who is the present clerk.



The resident members by the last official returns are fifty-three ; non-resident members twenty-one.

There was a sabbath school organized about the year 1821, which was a union school of the Baptists and Congregationalists. Some time after that each denomination organized a school of its own, and have kept them up since.

#### METHODIST.

The first methodist who preached in this town was the Rev. Labon Clark. The time Mr. Clark preached here, hereinbefore appears in his letter. It also appears that then there was but one methodist family in town.

As early as 1815 there was a class formed in "Burnam Hollow," in the west part of the town. Cyril Leach, a brother of Rev. B. N. Leach, was the leader of the class. At one time there was a goodly number of members in the class. Mrs. Willard and Mrs. Leffingwell, daughters of John Burnam, were members of it, also Mrs. Nye, and others. They had preaching occasionally by circuit preachers, in the school houses in that part of the town. The last years of the existence of this class it was not as well sustained. The present Methodist Episcopal church and society in Middletown had its beginning as follows : In 1834 a class was formed in the village by Anthony Rice, consisting of James Germond and wife, and Samuel Hathaway and wife. Soon afterwards John Gray and wife were added to the class, and James Germond was appointed class leader. This class commenced holding meetings in the school house in the village, but from some cause were obliged to leave that place and hold their meetings at private houses.

In 1835 the society was formed, which will appear from the following record :

"We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of Middletown, in the county of Rutland, and State of Vermont, do hereby voluntarily associate and agree to form a society by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Society of Middletown, county and state aforesaid, for the purpose of purchasing a situation for, and building a meeting house, according to the first section of an act enti-

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tled "an act for the support of the gospel," passed October 26th, 1798.

In witness whereof we have hereunto severally set our hands.

ELI OATMAN,  
SAMUEL YOUNG,  
MARCUS STODDARD,  
SAMUEL HATHAWAY,  
CHARLES LAMB,  
JAMES GERMOND,  
NATH'L W. MARTIN,  
JUSTUS BARKER,  
JOHN GRAY."

Dated at Middletown, this 23th day of November, A. D. 1835."

The meeting house contemplated in the foregoing, was built in the year 1837. It was built with a basement for a town room, but the town have since surrendered their claim to it for that purpose. The house was dedicated by Rev. John Weaver, then a presiding elder, in the winter of 1838. Samuel Young was the first preacher in the charge of this society.

April 16th, A. D. 1842, a Sabbath School was formed, and by the constitution, which appears in the handwriting of James Germond, was called the Methodist Episcopal Sabbath School, in Middletown. The officers under that constitution, for that year (1842) were:

*Superintendent.*—LUCIUS ABBOTT.

*Librarian.*—HARVEY HOADLEY.

*Secretary and Treasurer.*—JAMES GERMOND.

*Visiting Committee.*—John Fitch, M. Smith, Elisha Rogers, P. Germond, L. W. Winslow, J. Willard, P. H. Smith, A. J. Hoadley, A. Hyde, M. Woodworth, James Germond, E. Stoddard.

*Teachers.*—Elisha Rogers, P. Germond, J. Darling, E. Marshall, Charles Lamb, L. Doughty, Justus Barker, L. Burnam, A. Hyde, H. Babcock.

The Methodist society in Middletown, like the other religious denominations here, have had its seasons of prosperity and adversity. They gained rapidly on the start. By the time their house



of worship was completed in the winter of 1838, they had a congregation nearly or quite as large as either of the other denominations, and they have since kept it up nearly as large. That society have been unfortunate in losing many of their prominent and useful members by death.

James Germond, their first class leader—the leader of their singing—and a faithful laborer until he died, in October, 1855. He was a quiet, unassuming man, yet to him perhaps more than any other the Methodist Episcopal church is indebted for their rise and early progress.

John Fitch was a local preacher, and removed from Pawlet, his native place, to Middletown as early as 1838, where he resided until February, 1859, when he died. Mr. Fitch was never the preacher in charge, but took an active part in the affairs of the church, and a considerable portion of the time supplied the desk. He will be long remembered by those of that church who have survived him, as an earnest, zealous laborer in his Master's vineyard.

In 1862, when the Rev. H. D. Hitchcock was the preacher in charge, the methodist house was thoroughly repaired, and like the Baptist and Congregational houses of worship, is now in good condition. Whiting Merrill was very active in procuring the repairs on the meeting house, contributed largely of his means, and did much by way of procuring subscriptions, and superintending the work. Mr. Merrill seemed to have this work much at heart; he succeeded in getting it completed in accordance with his wishes and tastes; but in three short years, he was called to take up his abode in that house not made with hands. Mr. Merrill commenced life a poor boy, but by his diligence, industry, good economy and good management had secured a competence. He had hardly passed the prime of life when he died. Mr. Merrill had for some years been the leader of a class. Joseph Banister was appointed to fill his place, and served but a few months when he took his departure for the better land.

The present preacher in charge is the Rev. George Sutton.

I do not pretend to give more than a mere outline of the history



of the churches in Middletown. My limits will not permit of my doing more than that, and perhaps I have hardly done that, but enough has been given, I hope, to encourage others to do the work more thoroughly.

The ecclesiastical history of the town will afford matter for useful reflection and study. Scarce any subject aside from the truths of the Bible is more worthy of our attention, or would prove of greater utility. It is true there are some unpleasant things in connection with the history of each of the churches here, but we must expect those will occur in these and all other churches. I cannot but feel that great good has been accomplished by the churches here. I have no time for remarks, but allow me to say that we would do well to bear this in mind; that our religious institutions are the hope of our country; that unless we can sustain them, we may as well surrender all the institutions of society and government, and go at once into anarchy and confusion. But we shall not do that. We shall, I trust, sustain our churches; all our religious institutions; and may we not with profit to ourselves, study the examples of our fathers and mothers who founded these churches; and would it not be for our interest, and the interest of the Redeemer's cause, that we should return to their zeal, their faithfulness, their devotedness and their standard of piety. From these three churches, small though they are, members are every year going from them to other parts of the land. They carry with them the influences, the impressions, the education you give them. You have sent out no less than eight ministers from these churches, who were natives of the town, one as a missionary to foreign lands. Many others who have gone from here are holding prominent positions in different churches in the far west and other places. Why then should not these churches be sustained, and with the blessing of God continue to do their part of the work in hastening that time, "when all shall know the Lord."

From 1820 to 1840 the population of the town remained about the same; there was a little falling off, but no essential difference. As we look back within this period we find but few left of the first





settlers of the town, and those few have retired from active life. The active men then here consisted of the descendants of the pioneers, and of men who had more recently removed here. Among the then active men here were Jonas Clark, Hezekiah Haynes, Jonathan Morgan, Eli Oatman, Roswell Buel, David and Levi Mehurin, Stephen Keyes, Jaaz. and Stephen Barrett, Merritt and Horace Clark, Allen and Micah Vail, Luther Buxton, Anson Rogers, Alonzo Hyde, James Germond, Justus Barker, Thaddeus Terrill, Reuben Loomis, Smith Wait, John P. Taylor, Menira Caswell and Henry Gray.

That class of men seemed to have been the connecting link between the past and the present—that is, between the early settlement of the town and the present time. They were in the main, as well those named, as others then living here and not named, a substantial class of men.

Janzaniah Barrett was for many years a merchant here. He owned and lived in the house now owned by M. E. Vail, Esq., in which he and his family now reside. That house was built by Amasa Squires not long after 1800, and was for many years occupied as a hotel, by Jeremiah Leffingwell and a Mr. Monroe. The store occupied by Mr. Barrett was the one, until recently, occupied by Mr. Vail, which has been taken down and removed. Mr. Barrett for many years did a large business as a merchant, and in buying and selling cattle and farm produce; the latter was much more to the advantage of the farmers than for him.

Allen and Micah Vail removed from Danby to this town about the year 1810; raised up large families here, and during their residence here, were among the leading and successful farmers. They are both dead, and but one representative from each family now remains here; Mrs. E. Ross, a daughter of Allen Vail, and M. E. Vail, a son of Micah Vail.

Henry Gray was perhaps as long an active business man as any other man who has ever lived in the town since the days of John Burnam. Mr. Gray was an unusually energetic and persevering man. He suffered many losses by fire and other casualties, but was full of life, hope and animation—almost to the day of his death—which occurred in June, 1865, at the age of seventy-eight



years. From the days of the Burnam and the Miners, until a recent period, Henry Gray was almost the sole proprietor of all the mills in town, and machinery propelled by water power. Mr. Gray was long a member of the Congregational society, and contributed liberally to its support.

During the period of which I have last been speaking, viz, between 1820 and 1840, there was a change, a great change, going on in the industrial efforts of the people; it was a change which severed our connection with the good old times and left them behind us—the times when the ox yokes, the ox bows, the whip stocks, and other necessary implements, were made in the long evenings before a blazing fireplace—the times when he was considered the best manager who did “everything within himself”—the times when, as the men worked, the hum of the little linen wheel, or the large wheel for spinning wool, or the rattle of the shuttle and treads in the loom mingled with the crackle of the fire and the sounds of the axe and drawing knife. As some one has written: “the women then picked their own wool, carded their own rolls, spun their own yarn, drove their own looms, made their own cloth, cut, made and mended their own garments, dipped their own candles, made their own soap, bottomed their own chairs, braided their own baskets, wove their own carpets, quilts and coverlids, picked their own geese, milked their own cows, fed their own calves, and went visiting or to meeting on their own feet, and all this with much less fuss and ado than our modern ladies make when they are simply obliged to oversee the work of an ordinary household in these days.”

But we cannot return to those days in the way of doing “everything within ourselves,” nor is it best for the women now to undertake the manufacture of their own cloth, or to do much other work that was formerly done by their sex; with the advance of the present age in machinery and labor-saving implements, it would be a waste of time. But we would do well, both men and women, to return to the industry of those times. It must be conceded that both men and women (especially women) have wonderfully degenerated in their physical capacity since these good old times, and all are agreed as to the cause of it. Men and women were made





to labor, and unless they do, they violate the laws of their physical constitutions. If we desire to have the next generation robust and healthy, there is a way to effect it, and that is for the present generation to occupy their time steadily and reasonably in manual labor.

In the financial revulsion of 1839, many farmers and others in Middletown, suffered severely. Many were largely in debt, the "credit system" which was then a system for everybody proved disastrous to many industrious and honest men in Middletown. Soon after 1840 the business in the town seemed to be on the decline. Merritt Clark had removed to Poultney; Horace Clark, also Janzaniah Barrett, had gone out of the mercantile business; the building of railroads through the State had come to be agitated, and it was becoming evident, that no line of railroad would pass through Middletown; large farmers were enlarging their borders, and small farmers were selling out and going west. The consequence was that from 1840 to 1850 the population of the town fell off about two hundred, and up to 1860 there was no gain in population. By the census of 1860, we had only seven hundred and twelve inhabitants. Since 1860 there must have been a gain in the number of inhabitants, as some business interests have recently sprung up here, and altogether the town is improving. The town is essentially an agricultural town and must continue so to be. There is no better soil for that purpose in Rutland county. Keeping a dairy is now the main business of most of the farmers. The Middletown Cheese Manufacturing Company was organized in the spring of 1864, and proceeded at once to erect buildings for the purpose of manufacturing cheese. The manufacturing room is twenty-six feet square; the curing house is a two story building, seventy-two feet long and thirty feet wide. The making of cheese commenced in the summer of 1864, and has been in successful operation ever since, and has much increased the farming interest and the value of real estate in the town. The capital stock of the company is \$4,600. The number of pounds of milk received at the factory the last season (1866) was 1,707,814. Number of pounds of cheese made from the



same, when cured, was 173,970 ; and the gross receipts for the same was \$30,383 19.

Most of the farmers in Middletown are now in comfortable circumstances, mostly out of debt, and many of them are money lenders. In respect to thrift and good management they have much improved from the farmers of twenty-five years ago. There are here now two stores. "The Clark Store," has recently been fitted up in modern style by the proprietor, M. E. Vail, and well filled with a choice assortment of goods ; the other store adjoining the tavern house has recently been purchased by A. W. Gray & Sons, and is now undergoing through repairs, and will probably soon be in "running order." There are here the requisite number of mechanic shops, a manufactory of wagons and carriages by the McClures, of agricultural implements by E. W. Gray, and of horse powers by A. W. Gray & Sons. These manufactories are remunerative to the proprietors, and add much to the material interests of the town, and especially the horse power manufactory. A. W. Gray & Sons have in their employ about thirty men—men who are needed in the town—many of whom could not get employment here as mechanics except at that establishment. The concern furnishes quite a market for the farm produce in town, and for lumber. The springing up of this establishment, after nearly all other manufacturing in the town had ceased, or was waning, is exceedingly fortunate for the town. A. W. Gray was the inventor of the horse power now manufactured by A. W. Gray & Sons. He was formerly a millwright, learned his trade of Henry Gray, but had given a good deal of his time for some years, previous to 1856, to inventing.

The horse powers manufactured by the Messrs. Grays find a ready sale, and are without doubt great labor-saving machines. They are used for sawing wood, threshing and other purposes, and are undoubtedly superior to anything of the kind now in use. They are sent to all parts of the country, and the proprietors might, if they desired very much, extend their business.



## TOWN CLERKS

OF MIDDLETOWN FROM ITS ORGANIZATION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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JOSEPH ROCKWELL,	from	1784	to	1799
NATHANIEL WOOD, JR.,	"	1799	"	1802
ORSON BREWSTER,	"	1802	"	1812
JABEZ JOSLIN, -	"	1812	"	1813
ORSON BREWSTER, -	"	1813	"	1815
BARKER FRISBIE, -	"	1815	"	1821
DYER LEFFINGWELL,	"	1821	"	1822
CYRUS ADAMS, -	"	1822	"	1829
ELIAKIM PAUL, -	-	"	1829	" 1836
ORSON CLARK, -	"	1836	"	1842
LUTHER FILMORE, -	"	1842	"	1845
ADIN H. GREEN, -	"	1844	"	1847
ELIAKIM PAUL, -	-	"	1847	" 1849
ADIN H. GREEN, -	"	1849	"	1852
ELIJAH ROSS, -	-	"	1852	" 1856
BARNES FRISBIE, -	"	1856	"	1860
ELIJAH ROSS, -	-	"	1860	" 1861
GEO. W. BULLARD,	"	1861	"	1863
ELIJAH ROSS, -	-	"	1863	" 1865
MOSES E. VAIL, -	"	1865	"	1866
ELIJAH ROSS, " -	"	1866	"	1867

ERWIN HASKINS was elected March, 1867, and is the present Town Clerk.



# AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. 60610

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1960	100	1	1-100
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1960	100	98	9701-9800
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1960	100	100	9901-10000

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## REPRESENTATIVES.

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LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES IN MIDDLETOWN FROM THE ORGAN-  
IZATION OF THE TOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME—1867.

JOSEPH SPAULDING,	-	from 1785 to 1788
JOHN BURNAM,	-	1788
EPHRAIM CARR,	-	from 1788 to 1792
JONATHAN BREWSTER,	-	1792
NATHANIEL WOOD,	-	1793
JONATHAN BREWSTER,	-	1794
JOHN BURNAM,	-	1795
JONATHAN BREWSTER,	-	1796
JOHN BURNHAM,	-	from 1796 to 1799
NATHANIEL WOOD, JR.,	-	" 1799 to 1804
JOHN BURNAM,	-	1804
DYER LEFFINGWELL,	-	from 1804 to 1807
JOHN BURNAM,	-	1807
JONAS CLARK, JR.,	-	from 1807 to 1810
JACOB BURNAM,	-	1810
JONAS CLARK,	-	from 1810 to 1823
DAVID G. MCCLURE,	-	" 1823 to 1829
ALLEN VAIL,	-	1829
ELIAKIM PAUL,	-	from 1829 to 1832
MERRITT CLARK,	-	" 1832 to 1834
ORSON CLARK,	-	" 1834 to 1836
ELIAKIM PAUL,	-	" 1836 to 1838
JONATHAN MORGAN,	-	1838
MERRITT CLARK,	-	1839
ELIAKIM PAUL,	-	from 1839 to 1842
C. B. HARRINGTON,	-	" 1842 to 1844
HORACE CLARK,	-	" 1844 to 1846



C. B. HARRINGTON,	-	-	1846
HARRIS G. OTIS,	-		1847
WM. N. GRAY,	-	from	1847 to 1850
ROSWELL BUEL, JR.,	-	-	1850
ELIAKIM PAUL,	-	from	1850 to 1853
JACOB BURNAM,	-	-	1853
BARNES FRISBIE,	-	from	1853 to 1856
LUCIUS COPELAND,	-	"	1856 to 1858
C. P. COY,	-	"	1858 to 1860
ROSWELL BUEL,	-	"	1860 to 1862
NATHANIEL CLIFF,	-	"	1862 to 1864
HARLEY SPAULDING,	-	"	1864 to 1866
A. W. GRAY,	-	-	1866 to 1867

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## SOLDIERS' RECORD.

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After the foregoing history of Middletown was written and read to the people there, the town instructed their selectmen, at their last March meeting, to engage me to make up a soldiers' record of the town for the year 1861. I removed from Middletown to Poultney in April, 1863, and consequently did not live in Middletown during the entire period of the war, but with the assistance of the selectmen and others I have collected all I could that was deemed material for such a record. With a simple statement of facts, Middletown has a record of which her citizens may well be proud. They promptly met the emergency—raised the money and the men, from time to time, as they were required, and notwithstanding the great outlay required to pay the large bounties and large taxes, when the war closed, the town had paid every dollar, so that the war closed without any war debt upon Middletown. The town paid in bounties more than they were legally bound to do. They paid in all \$6,609. Two of her soldiers, Merritt Perham and Harvey Guilder, re-enlisted to the credit of the town without any contract with the authorities; previous to this the town had been paying a bounty of five hundred dollars—a meeting was called and the sum of \$500 each was voted to them and paid.

In proportion to the number subject to military duty, a large number enlisted into the service from the town. In the summer of 1863 the roll of men subject to be drafted from numbered fifty-eight. During the period of the war there were fifty-one enlisted into the service from Middletown—some ten or twelve more than was required to fill the quotas of the town.

To the credit of the town it may be said, that those who went into the service, were, most of them, at least, from among the best

## THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute is a quarterly publication devoted to the study of man and his development. It is the only English journal which deals with the whole range of anthropological subjects, including physical anthropology, ethnology, and social anthropology. The Journal is published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, which was founded in 1871. The Institute is a learned society which promotes the study of man and his development. The Journal is edited by the President of the Institute, who is elected by the members. The Journal is published in four parts, each containing three or four papers. The papers are written by leading anthropologists from all over the world. The Journal is a valuable source of information for all those who are interested in the study of man and his development. It is a must-read for all anthropologists and a valuable reference work for all those who are interested in the study of man and his development.

families of the town. They were not bounty-jumpers, nor of that class of low, wreckless and abandoned young men, too many of whom were picked up by most of the towns and made to count on their quotas; but hardly without an exception they were young men of good moral character, intelligent, and with a good common education, and for the most part with good, hardy physical constitutions. No one of them ever deserted, or were court-martialed for any offence, and but one or two received even a censure for violation of rules. They proved to be brave and faithful soldiers; a large proportion of them served out the time for which they enlisted, and returned to their homes to be again useful and respected citizens; some never returned; four or five were killed in battle, or died from wounds received; eleven died of disease.

To William Schollar is due the credit of being the first man who enlisted from Middletown in the war of 1861. He enlisted under the call of the President for seventy-five thousand men, and went into company E of the first regiment of Vermont volunteers for three months. He served his time out, and afterwards enlisted into Harris' light cavalry, an organization got up in the state of New York. After several months service in this cavalry organization, his health failed and he received an honorable discharge. He returned home, regained his health, and in 1863 enlisted into the tenth Vermont regiment, in which he served to the close of the war. He held the office of sargeant in company C., tenth Vermont, and was a faithful soldier.

The next who enlisted from Middletown were Frank Carrigan and Merritt Perham. They enlisted into the second Vermont regiment, which were mustered into the service June 20th, 1861. Carrigan after serving a while was found missing and has never been heard of since. It is supposed that he is dead; Perham served his time out (three years) and re-enlisted into the seventh Vermont and served to the end of the war.

Stephen A. Griswold, Edwin Higgins, Samuel Buxton, Harvey Guilder, enlisted into the seventh Vermont, which regiment was mustered into the service February 12th, 1862. Stephen A. Griswold died at Pensacola, Florida, November 3d, 1862, of fever. He was a very strong, muscular young man, but had the measles





after he enlisted, and before he was mustered in, took cold, and it is thought by his friends that he was never well afterwards, though he performed good service as a soldier until a short time prior to his death. He was the only son of the widow of David Griswold, on whom she doubtless relied for support in her declining years. Edwin Higgins, of the same regiment, died near New Orleans. We have not the date of his death, but it was after Griswold died, and while he, Higgins, was in the service. He was the oldest son of Orrin Higgins, who served in the tenth Vermont regiment. Buxton and Guilder served to the end of the war, and were honorably discharged.

Royal Lucien Coleman enlisted into the ninth Vermont, June 9th, 1863, and died October 3d, 1864, so that he was in the service a year and some months. He was a son of Harry Coleman, who was a brother of Royal Coleman, Esq., of this town.

There were a large number enlisted from Middletown into the tenth Vermont regiment, and all went into company C of that regiment. The regiment was mustered into the service September 1st, 1862. Prior to that time, Edwin R. Buxton, Aden N. Green, Erwin Haskins, Charles H. Dayton, Henry Barce, Alonzo Atwater, William Hoadley, Francis H. Hoadley, Curtis Howard, Henry J. Langzine, Harlan P. Leffingwell, Arunah Leffingwell, John H. Lewis, Warren McClure, William Schollar, William H. H. Thompson, Philander C. Wetmore, Robert A. Woodward and Edward Holton, had enlisted and were mustered into the service with the regiment—making nineteen who were mustered in with the regiment. In December, 1863, James N. Buel, Lorenzo Ford, Allen Hubbard, Jr., Orrin Higgins and Charles W. McClure enlisted, and went into company C, of the tenth Vermont, making, in all, twenty-four of the Middletown boys in that regiment. They all enlisted for three years, or during the war, and Buxton, Green, Barce, Atwater, William and Francis Hoadley, Howard, Langzine, Harlan P. Leffingwell, Warren and Charles W. McClure, Schollar, Wetmore, Woodward, Hubbard and Higgins, seventeen of the twenty-four, served out their time, were honorably discharged, and returned to their homes, with the exception of Henry Barce, who was taken sick after his discharge, and died near Washington on



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his way home. Erwin Haskins was taken sick in the fall after his enlistment, and run down so low that he barely had strength to get home. He was discharged December 19th, 1862. On his return home, contrary to the expectations of all who saw him, he gradually recovered, until now he is comparatively well again. Arunah Leffingwell was taken sick and discharged about the same time, returned home and has since recovered his health. John H. Lewis was wounded by a ball through the thigh at Winchester on the 19th day of September, 1864, went to the hospital, and remained there until he was discharged. He was in the hard fought battles of the Wilderness, Cold Harbor and Spottsylvania, was a good soldier, and manfully performed his duty until disabled by the wound above named. The first death of the boys of the tenth, from Middletown, was that of Charles H. Dayton. He died September 26th, 1862, near Washington—less than one month after his regiment was mustered into the service. He was the son of Mrs. Jay B. Norton, by her former husband, Doctor J. H. Dayton, and was but eighteen years old when he enlisted, and had been regarded as a high spirited boy, but had come to show some good traits of character, and was, withal, in his last years, looked upon by those who knew him as a promising young man. He was sick only about one week. His remains were brought home and interred in Middletown by the side of those of his father; and thus we have an instance, among thousands of others in the country, where the hope of a fond mother has perished by the sad results of the wicked rebellion.

Edward Holton was in the service nearly a year. He was a son of Garrett Holton, an Irishman, and a very respectable man, who has since deceased. Edward died of disease August 15th, 1863, at the age of twenty-one years. His comrades give him the credit of being a good soldier, and of faithfully performing his duty as long as he was able.

Henry Barge, as we have before mentioned, served his time out and was on his way home when he was taken sick, of fever, and died June 17th, 1865, at the age of twenty-six. His health was good through his entire term of service, from the first of September, 1862, until the close of the war. He never failed of being



able to perform his duty as a soldier, was in all of the battles in which the tenth were engaged during the war, and of his sagacity and bravery, his associates all speak in the highest terms. He was a still, quiet young man, but strong, athletic, decided and prompt in acting, and possessed more education and knowledge than any other person of his age in the town, when he enlisted. He leaves a sister and distant relatives to mourn his loss.

Wm. H. H. Thompson, a cousin of Henry Barce, was taken prisoner at Falls Church, when Culpepper was evacuated by our forces, and died in Libby Prison, at Richmond, in the winter of 1864. His loss seemed to his associates more sad than if he had been killed in battle.

James N. Buel enlisted in December, 1863, and was killed at Cold Harbor June 1st, 1864. He lay at the time, with others of his company, behind a log in front of the enemy watching their chances to deliver their fire upon the rebel sharp shooters, in the vicinity, when Buel, anxious to "get a shot at the rebs," raised his head high enough to receive a ball in the head, which killed him instantly; and thus perished a brave soldier—one who had been an industrious man and a good citizen at home, and doubtless would have been again if he had been permitted to return. Mr. Buel was forty years old; he left a wife and two children. He was a son of Roswell Buel, Sen., who has since died.

Lorenzo Ford enlisted December 10th, 1863, and died in the army hospital at Brandy Station, in Virginia, of fever, March 16th, 1864. He had good health when he enlisted, and his health had generally been good. He was not sick very long; performed his duty faithfully as a soldier, for the little time he was in the service. His age was twenty-six; he left a widow and one child. His widow has since married in Michigan, and his child lives with her aunt, Mrs. Bassett, in Middletown. He was a son of Joel Ford.

All who know the history of the war of 1861, well know that the tenth Vermont regiment had the reputation of being one of the best regiments in the army. Officers of high rank, who were witnesses of their bravery, their endurance and skill, and their reliability in trying times, have invariably spoken of the tenth





Vermont in the highest terms. If the regiment was made up of as good material as that part of it from Middletown, (and I do not know why it was not,) surely those encomiums of the officers were well bestowed. We have this foundation for saying what we have of the boys from Middletown, in the tenth. We knew them all—most of them intimately—and know that mentally, morally and physically, with very few exceptions, they were of a material which makes the best of soldiers; and we heard from them in the war, not only from themselves, in speaking of the conduct of each other in the many hard fought fields, but we heard facts from others, soldiers and officers, who were there and had no interest to give us anything but facts.

There are many incidents that might be here given that would perhaps interest those who may read this sketch, and go to prove what we have asserted, but we must omit them for want of time.

Edwin R. Buxton, Aden H. Green and William Schollar, rose from the ranks to sergeants of their company, and they, with Barce, Lewis, Howard, Buel, Hubbard, Woodward and Charles McClure, were particularly distinguished for their fearless discharge of duty. Buxton, Green and Woodward each received wounds. Buxton and Green were hit by balls several times, and Buxton, in the fight at Cold Harbor, was obliged to leave the field, and was unable to perform duty for several days afterwards. Woodward received a wound on the foot at the same time, which disabled him for a short time.

Warren McClure was detailed for hospital service soon after his regiment was mustered in, where he remained on duty until he went into the tenth regiment band. He played a cornet in that band until the close of the war.

William H. Hoadley was a musician (drummer) from the time the regiment was mustered into the service until the close of the war.

The number of battles in which the the tenth regiment were engaged, as reported by the Adjutant General, are thirteen, commencing with Orange Grove, in November, 1863, and ending with Sailors' Creek, in April, 1865. Those embrace the battles of Grant's campaign, which ended in the fall of Richmond, and the



overthrow of the great rebellion. Besides the battles as given by the Adjutant General in which the tenth were engaged, they were in numerous skirmishes, in which men were killed and wounded; in all these the Middletown boys, in the tenth, who had not been killed or disabled by wounds or sickness, bore a part, honorable to themselves, and efficient in the great work then in hand, viz: putting down the rebellion.

Middletown sent three good soldiers in the eleventh Vermont regiment: James Granger, George and James Kilburn. Granger enlisted in July, 1863, into company M of the eleventh, and was mustered into the service October 7th, 1863. He was the second son of the Rev. Calvin Granger, who, at the time of the son's enlistment, was pastor of the Congregational church in Middletown. This regiment was known as the first Vermont artillery, and enlisted for three years or during the war. Young Granger was in most of the battles in Grant's campaign, after the battle of the Wilderness. He was a good soldier; he has that kind of philosophy in his mental constitution with which he, under all circumstances, readily disposes of all causes of fear or alarm. He served to the end of the war—came out healthy and strong, and is again at his old trade of machinist as steady as ever.

The Kilburns never returned. George was wounded in action at Cold Harbor, and died of his wounds July 9th, 1864. James died of sickness, at Washington, August 22d, 1864. George was twenty-six years old at the time of his death, and James was twenty-two. They were good soldiers; so say their officers, and their reliable comrade, James Granger. They were in several actions, and faced the "music," like brave soldiers. They were brothers and were sons of Truman Kilburn. The father, as Middletown people very well know, has had a large family, but has done very little himself for the support of his family. It is, therefore one cause of sadness, that the mother of these sons, and her younger children, should be deprived of the aid of those two industrious and kind-hearted young men.

There were two enlisted from Middletown into the 12th Vermont regiment. They were Charles H. Granger and Delet B. Haynes. The regiment was mustered into the service October 4th, 1862,





and mustered out of the service July 14th, 1863. Granger and Haynes enlisted into company K, known as the "Rutland Light Guard." Charles H. Granger was the third son of the Rev. Calvin Granger, and Delet B. Haynes was the oldest son of the Rev. Aaron Haynes, a Baptist clergyman, then residing in Middletown. Both served out their time faithfully, and returned again to their homes. They were never in any action, but, as they said, "it was not their fault." Their regiment was never called into any action while in the service.

Middletown sent seven brave, sturdy fellows in the fourteenth regiment. They were, Homer H. Southwick, Reuben Spaulding, George Spaulding, Erwin Hyde, William Cairns, Eliphalet Eddy and John Louis Southwick. The two Spauldings, Hyde and Eddy served their time; Cairns was killed at the battle of Gettysburg, in which they all participated, except Louis, who was discharged April 21st, 1863, by reason of an accidental discharge of fire arms, which so injured one of his hands as to render him incapable of doing further service. Eddy was wounded, at Gettysburg, in the arm by the bursting of a shell, and has drawn a pension since he left the service, but has now nearly recovered the use of his arm. Homer H. Southwick was a sergeant of company B, and Erwin Hyde and Reuben Spaulding were corporals. Southwick had charge of the ambulance corps at Gettysburg, and performed his duty faithfully and well. He was a good soldier, and so were they all, and with the exception of Eddy and Cairns they are all now in Middletown engaged on farms and in shops, as they were before the war—the same industrious, peaceful, useful citizens. Eddy has removed to Michigan. Cairns sleeps on the field at Gettysburg; he was an Irishman, but was a young man of intelligence and character, and volunteered, as he said, because he felt that it was his duty so to do. May he be remembered as one of the brave boys who sacrificed his life to save the American Republic.

We have now spoken of all who enlisted "to the credit of the town;" that is, those named were counted to make up, and did make up, the quota of Middletown, but they were not all who gave their aid in the great struggle. The country had the services of





others, and to them we owe a debt of gratitude, and let us here acknowledge it.

Andrew Perry, Obadiah Cole and John S. Bateman, went from Middletown and enlisted to the credit of the town of Poultney. Perry, after a short period of service, was sick, and received his discharge, and returned home; Cole and Bateman served to the end of the war.

There were seven from Middletown who enlisted into regiments out of the state. These were William and Henry Clift, Joseph Cary, Robert Parks, William Grover, Martin V. B. Woodworth and Horace Green. William Clift enlisted in an Iowa regiment for three years, and served his time; Henry into the 111th New York regiment; both were good soldiers, and left the service under the assurance from their officers that they had been faithful servants.

Joseph Cary we have been able to learn but little about. He was not long a resident of the town. He, with Parks, Grover and Green enlisted into what was known as the "Harris Light Cavalry," as early as August, 1861. They were enlisted at Fairhaven, but the regiment was a New York regiment, or became such afterwards. Of those four, three died, two of sickness, and one from a wound received while in an engagement. Parks died of the measles. He went into the service a strong, healthy, resolute young man, but after a few months took the measles which resulted in his death. He was a son of Robert Parks, Esq., of Wells, had not lived in Middletown over two or three years prior to his enlistment, but had lived there long enough to gain the respect of those who knew him.

William Grover was a son of Calvin, and a young man of good character. He made a good soldier, and was a good length of time in the service, but death from disease finally terminated his existence, and another patriot boy was lost to the service of his country.

Horace Green was the youngest son of Aden H. Green, Esq., deceased, and a half brother of Aden H. Green of the tenth Vermont. His mother's maiden name was Margaret Bigelow; she was the eldest daughter of Rev. Henry Bigelow. Horace was in



Kilpatrick's cavalry, and was one of the most daring soldiers in the army. He was wounded on the Danville Railroad, in Virginia, in June, 1864, and died in Middletown the December following.

Rev. M. M. Martin preached his funeral sermon, from which we make the following extract :

"Horace Green, whose death has called us together to-day, enlisted into the United States service on the 30th of August, 1861. He was in nearly every battle and raid in which the army of the Potomac was engaged from that time until he received the wound that caused his death. On the 29th of June, 1862, General Wilson with his command was on his return from a raid on the Danville Road, when they met the enemy and at twelve o'clock at night a portion of the cavalry was thrown out as skirmishers. Our friend was among the number, and was shot through the head. Our forces were obliged to retreat and leave their wounded on the field. His orderly sergeant was wounded and left on the field with him, and to him, Horace, was indebted to the lengthening out of his life, and his return home. When the enemy were about to bury Horace alive, the pleading of sergeant Nesbit saved him. They both remained five days on the field without food or drink. He died on the 21st of December, 1861. Thus another name is added to the list of brave martyrs to our country's cause."

It is surprising that the wound which Horace received had not killed him instantly, and still more surprising that he could, under the circumstances, have survived five days without food or drink. A minnie ball went through his head back of his eyes, and destroyed his sight so that he was not able to see afterwards. When he came home he seemed well ; he walked about as he was led or guided by some friend, and cheerfully conversed with his former friends and acquaintances. We had the pleasure of conversing with him two or three times. He evidently had the entire possession of his mental faculties. His recollection was good, and as he talked of the incidents of his childhood and youth in that lively and cheerful manner with which he was wont to do, we could hardly realize that he had received so terrible a wound. He died





suddenly, and with him departed the last representative of the Bigelow family in Middletown.

Martin Van Buren Woodworth, a son of John Woodworth was born the fourth of March, 1841. He enlisted in a New York regiment in the early part of the war. He was wounded by a shell, near Petersburg, Va., December 13th, 1862, and died the 29th of the same month. Martin, when a boy, was awkward and ungainly in his appearance, but as he approached manhood he seemed rapidly to develop a more than ordinary intellectual capacity, and good traits of character. He was really, at the time of his enlistment, a promising young man. His father was poor; had a large family; and of course was unable to do but little by way of educating his children; but some of them have "made their mark" in spite of pecuniary embarrassments, and we had every reason to suppose that Martin would, if he had been spared, but he was sacrificed with others to save the nation.

Now then, citizens of Middletown, shall we not hold in grateful remembrances those young men who, on their country's call, boldly went to the rescue! Thirty-six of the fifty-one or fifty-two who volunteered returned—the most of them after a long period of arduous service—and now a larger portion of that number are again in your midst, tilling your farms, at work in your shops, are members of your churches, are among your active and useful citizens. As we mingle with them in the business of life, shall we forget that those men have periled their lives for us, and our posterity. It is not claimed that they have any more rights as citizens in the community than others, but, as long as they live, they should be made to know and feel that their townsmen acknowledge their services to their full extent, in the war of 1861; anything short of that from their fellow citizens, would be base ingratitude. And will you not honor the names of the dead? Sixteen young men from the little town of Middletown go to make up the long list of martyred heroes in the war of 1861. Let those names be honored and cherished in your memories, and their noble deeds be recorded for an example to this and succeeding generations.

To the foregoing we will only add a poem written by Mrs.

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Catharine Southwick, the wife of Sergeant H. H. Southwick. She is a daughter of Mr. James Germond, deceased.

The poem was written by Mrs. Southwick without any intention of having it published, but at the solicitation of the writer of this history, she has given us permission to use it, and now we give it as a literary specimen from the town ; also as a fitting tribute to our fallen heroes.

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### IN MEMORY OF OUR HEROIC DEAD.

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Shall we forget that noble band  
Who, with a willing heart and hand,  
Went to obey our country's call,  
And freely yielded up their all ?  
Ah ! no ; the mem'ry of them still  
Doth ever cause our hearts to thrill  
With grief ; for we remember well  
The hour we bade them all farewell.  
The first sad news that reached us here,  
Since we had shed the parting tear,  
Was our friend Parks was cold in death ;  
So shocked we were we held our breath,  
And thought how short had been the time  
Since we received from him a line.  
Freighted with words of hope and cheer.  
We claimed him as a friend sincere,  
And mingled tears were freely shed,  
For him among our country's dead.  
And Grover, one of that brave band,  
Fell far from his own native land ;  
He suffer'd in that sad defeat,  
When from Manassas troops retreat ;  
His weary life he there laid down,  
And changed it for a victor's crown.  
Another in that list we find,



Who now is dead, but first was blind,  
Our noble Green, poor sightless boy,  
And yet he seem'd so full of joy,  
Amid his suffering and his pain,  
We hop'd that he might see again ;  
But soon a gloom was o'er us cast,  
We heard that he had breath'd his last ;  
He's not disturb'd by cannons roar,  
With him life's battles now are o'er.  
The next to swell the list of men,  
Whose regiment was number ten,  
Was Dayton, but a slender youth,  
Devoted to the cause of truth ;  
He scarce had reached a stranger-land,  
Ere he was stricken from their band ;  
A mother's pride, a mother's joy,  
How grieves she for her soldier-boy.  
Young Holton, too, gave up his life,  
Before he scarce had join'd the strife,  
And on a far-off southern shore  
He sleeps a sleep that wakes no more.  
Of Thompson, who, alas ! can tell,  
Of what he died and where he fell ;  
We ne'er shall know till that great day,  
When prison walls shall fall away,  
And captives shall go forth and reign  
Beyond the reach of death and pain.  
Then Barce, while he was homeward bound,  
Surely a soldier's grave he found,  
And though he fell so far away,  
Is sleeping now 'neath kindred clay ;  
For friends conveyed his body home,  
And laid it in its native tomb.  
The Kilburn boys their graves have found,  
The first, 'twas said, died of a wound ;  
The second suffer'd fever long,  
Then went to sing a victor's song ;  
Their bodies rest far from their home,  
All quiet in a soldier's tomb.





And still another in this list,—  
We hope that we no name shall miss ;—  
Our friend and neighbor, Ford, has gone,  
While aged parents for him mourn ;  
The prop of their declining years,  
For him they shed their bitter tears,  
But meekly bore the chastening rod,  
Believing 'twas the hand of God.  
The last among those ranks who fell,  
Was our friend, Buel, known so well ;  
How aged parents felt that stroke,  
As they the mournful tidings broke  
To her, his sad and weeping wife,  
That he had fallen in the strife ;  
Thou need'st not mourn for him as lost,  
For he fell bravely at his post.  
In the ninth regiment was one  
Whose earthly race was early run ;  
Young Coleman's sufferings were great,  
He shar'd with them a prisoner's fate ;  
His life, his all, he freely gave,  
He sleeps among the good and brave.  
A smaller company went out,  
Of nine months' men, all brave and stout ;  
Disease and death walked in their van,  
But they survived, all but one man.  
At Gettysburg brave Carns did fall,  
A victim to the cannon's ball ;  
Though none can trace his lowly bed,  
He sleeps among our honor'd dead.  
The seventh regiment had three,  
Who, after a long voyage at sea,  
Fell, and were laid by stranger-hand  
In graves beneath the burning sand ;  
Griswold and Heap, and Higgins, too,  
Have prov'd themselves to country true ;  
For near Miss'ippi's rolling tide,  
They nobly fought and nobly died.  
Young Schollar and the Hubbard's went,



We cannot name their regiment ;  
But they have shar'd the same sad fate,  
And kindred feel their loss is great ;  
They rest, but the brave deeds they've done,  
Have lasting honors for them won.  
A Woodworth fell, we know not where,  
Of honor, he deserves a share ;  
For he hath sacrificed his life,  
A victim to the deadly strife ;  
His cold remains, to kindred dear,  
Are sleeping in the church-yard here.  
We now desire, before we close  
This tale of war, with all its woes,  
To speak our gratitude of heart  
To those who bravely took a part  
In this great struggle for the right,  
And labor'd with their mind and might.  
God save you and reward you all,  
Since you obey'd your country's call ;  
And when this transient life is o'er,  
May you join brave ones gone before ;  
Your deed of honor and renown,  
Shall win for you a fadeless crown.

C. B. SOUTHWICK.





APPENDIX.

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Since the foregoing was written, Henry Clark, Esq., the Secretary of the Vermont Senate, has furnished me with some items from the State Records, which are important in connection with the history of Middletown, and which I herewith append ; also I find on reading the proof sheets from the printer, that some few important items written by me and read to the people in Middletown, either by my carelessness or the printers, (probably mine,) have not been printed. Among them is a biographical sketch of Doctor Eliakim Paul. As that part of the original manuscript has been mislaid or lost, and as I have no time to procure dates, etc., I must hastily supply it the best I can.

Doctor Eliakim Paul is the son of Stephen Paul, who died in Wells some twenty years since. He was a farmer, and lived from an early day in that part of Wells, formerly known as the "Lillie neighborhood." Eliakim, when a boy, worked on a farm, but from a misfortune, when a child, he was made a cripple for life ; and for that reason became a physician. He received his diploma at the Castleton Medical College in 1822, and immediately bought out Dr. David G. McClure, then in practice in Middletown, and from that time to the present Doctor Paul has been a practicing physician here, and, a portion of the time, the only physician. For a period of full forty-five years, a little over one half of the time since the town had a corporate existence, Doctor Paul has traveled over the hills and valleys of Middletown and vicinity, administering to the wants of the sick. He has deservedly had the reputation of being a good physician, and hundreds of us who have had his services in the healing art, will not forget his prompt and faithful attention to us when we have called on him. Doctor Paul has represented



Middletown in the Vermont House of Representatives eight years, and been town clerk eight years, and has, from the time he became a resident of the town, fully identified himself with its interests. He will be remembered as one of the most useful citizens of his time. Doctor Paul has had three children, Sabra R., Emmet and Daniel W. Sabra married Edwin Copeland, and has recently died; Emmet died in 1845, at the age of nineteen; Daniel W. graduated at Harvard College, studied law, and was for some years in partnership with Edwin Edgerton, Esq., at Rutland, but is now in successful practice in St. Louis.

Doctor Paul's health has been poor for some little time past, so much so that he has nearly relinquished the practice of his profession.

There are now two other physicians in Middletown, Doctor O. F. Thomas and Doctor S. H. Haynes, and each are doing a good business. Doctor Thomas has been in practice since about 1836, but several years of the former part of the time in Western New York. Doctor Haynes has been in practice since about 1841.

I find that I have said nothing of the part the citizens of Middletown took in the war of 1812, and indeed I have been able to gather but little information on that subject. There were several who enlisted and served in that war; only one (John Woodworth) to my knowledge survives. He was wounded at Fort Erie, and now draws a pension of ninety-six dollars a year. He had a large family, but none are now residing in Middletown, except his oldest daughter Mary. He has one son, Andrew J., who now resides in Philadelphia, and is a man of good business capacity, and has, as I am informed, accumulated a good deal of wealth. He gave the town of Middletown, a short time since, the sum of about one thousand dollars—it being what the town had expended for the support of an unfortunate insane sister who has been at Brattleboro for several years,—and also to relieve the town from her future support, made provision for the same.

This example is worthy of record, not only to preserve a generous act, but to show what a young man without means may do if he will. It is hardly twenty years since A. J. Woodworth came to school to me. He was then poorly clad—a bashful unpretend-



ing boy—yet he seemed to be resolute and determined in what he undertook to do, and, withal, was generous and kind hearted.

At the time of the battle of Plattsburgh a company of militia volunteered from Middletown, but they only got as far as Castleton when they were informed that the battle was over; they then returned. David Thomas is the only survivor of that company now living in Middletown; he went as drummer.

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#### THE ACT OF INCORPORATION.

At an adjourned session of the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, held at Bennington the third Thursday in February, 1784, on Friday afternoon, February 27th, the following record is made:

A petition signed by Joseph Spaulding, and fifty others, inhabitants of the northwest corner of Timmouth, northeast corner of Wells, southeast corner of Pouliney, and southwest corner of Ira, setting forth that the mountains, &c., around them are so impracticable to pass that it is with great trouble and difficulty that they can meet with the towns that they belong to, in town and other meetings, &c., and praying that they may be incorporated into a town, with the privileges, &c., was read and referred to a committee of five, to join a committee from the Council, to take the same under consideration, state facts and make report. The members chosen were Mr. Whipple, Mr. Moses Robinson, Mr. Jewett, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Cogsell.

On Monday, March 1st, 1784, the following record appears on the journal of the House:

The committee, Mr. Whipple, Mr. M. Robinson, Mr. Jewett, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Cogsell, with the Committee of the Council, appointed on the petition of Joseph Spaulding, and fifty-two other inhabitants of Wells, Timmouth, &c., brought in the following report:





"That it is our opinion that the petition be laid over until the next session of Assembly; and that this assembly appoint a disinterested Committee, consisting of three persons, at the cost of the petitioners, to go on the premises, state facts, and make report to the next session of Assembly."

The aforesaid report was read and accepted: Whereupon,

*Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to nominate three persons for said committee, and make report. The members chosen were Mr. S. Knight, Mr. Whipple and Mr. Cogsell.

On the opening of the afternoon session of that day the following record was made:

Mr. S. Knight, Mr. Whipple and Mr. Cogsell, the Committee appointed to nominate a disinterested Committee, on the petition of Joseph Spaulding, of Wells, &c., brought in the following report, viz:

"That they beg to nominate Mr. Moses Robinson, of Rupert, Mr. Nathaniel Blanchard, of Rutland, and Brewster Higley, Esq., of Castleton, for said Committee." Whereupon,

*Resolved*, That the aforesaid Moses Robinson, Nathaniel Blanchard and Brewster Higley, be, and they are hereby appointed a Committee, agreeable to the report of the Committee who took said petition under consideration, and that they make their report of the facts and their proceedings at the next session of the Assembly. And that Mr. Robinson appoint the time and place for hearing the parties, and notify the other members of the Committee, and the parties, to attend accordingly.

At the next session of the General Assembly, held in October at Rutland, the Committee made their report of the facts, accompanied with a bill incorporating certain territory of the towns of Wells, Poultney, Timmouth and Ira, into a town under the name of Middletown.

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